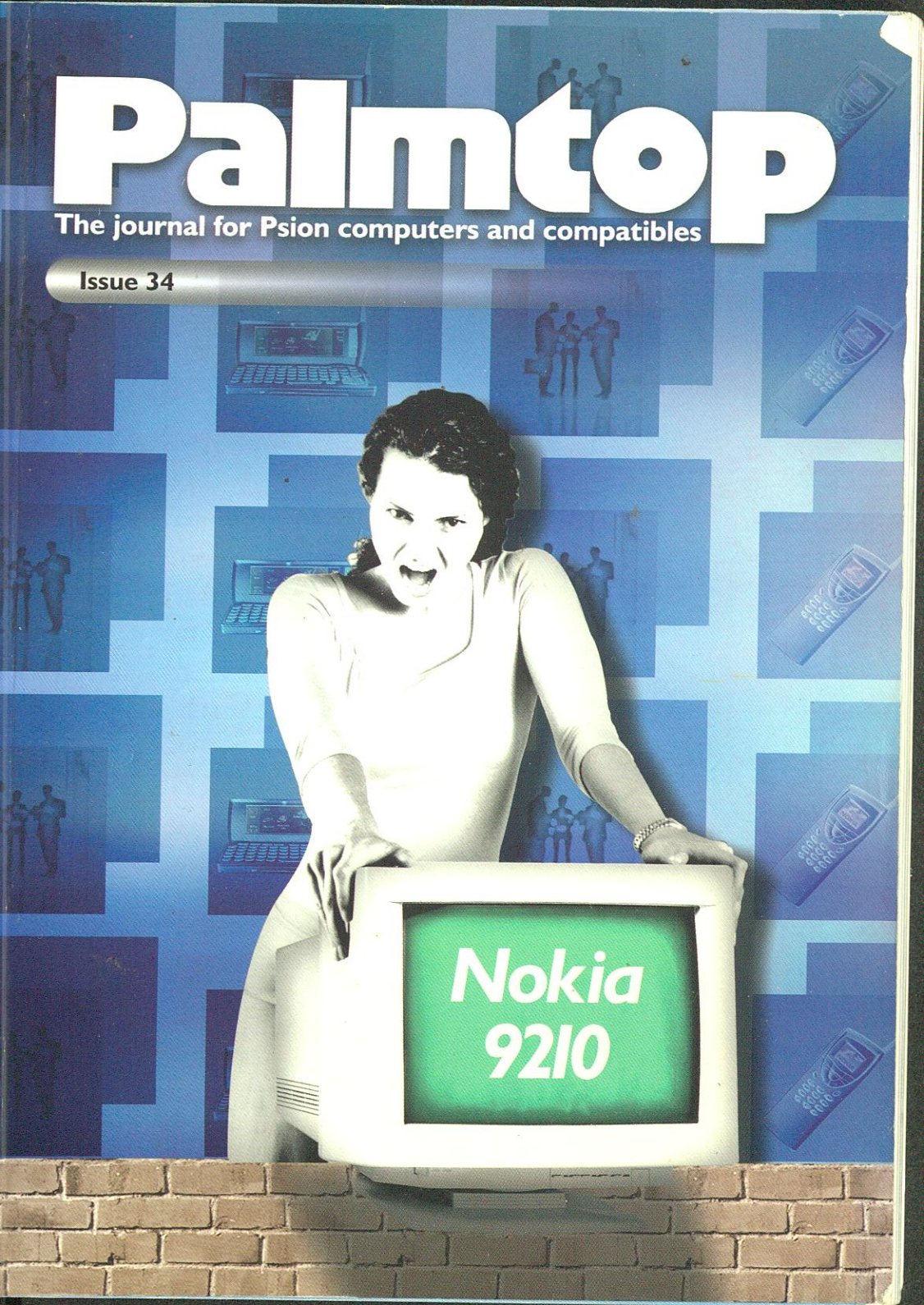
Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

Issue 34



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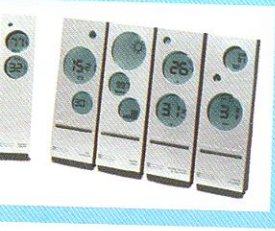

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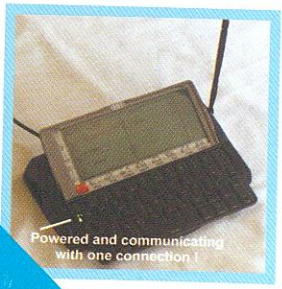

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Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

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EDITORIAL

Though these are traumatic and uncertain times for both Psion and Symbian, the rest of the handheld computer and mobile phone/communicator world appears to be in similar difficulty. Ericsson has recently laid off thousands of staff worldwide, and the seemingly invincible Palm Computing has had 50% wiped off its stock value within a matter of weeks.

Amidst all these goings on Psion are being constantly lambasted for their lack of new hardware releases, with its undoubted adverse affect on sales.

Having been a Psion user for almost 15 years now, it's hard to be totally subjective when Psion is criticised in this way, but at the risk of sounding biased in their favour, I have to say that at least some (but by no means all) of that criticism is partially unfounded.

One indirect example of such misinformation surfaced a few weeks ago when I read an article on the Web boasting that a new third-party Palm OS word processor was "...the best word processor for handheld computing, better than Microsoft's Pocket Word." As any Psion owner can attest, this is utter nonsense. Psion's built in word processor has been far superior to all other palmtop-based equivalents, even since the days of the original Series 3.

But, the important point here is that Psion Word was undoubtedly not even included in the equation. Without regular new hardware releases, Psion cannot maintain a sufficiently high profile for consumers (and certain reviewers, it would seem) to take due notice of their products. The fact that, taken objectively, the four year old Series 5 design still offers the most powerful, comprehensive and robust software suite of any handheld computer on the market is simply being lost in the clamour for new releases.

Steve Clack - June 2001

Palmtop is...

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Thanks... to all the other contributors whose names appear within Palmtop and those who have kindly supplied products for evaluation.

EPOC cartoons - Carl Reader

Printed by Century Web

NEWSREEL

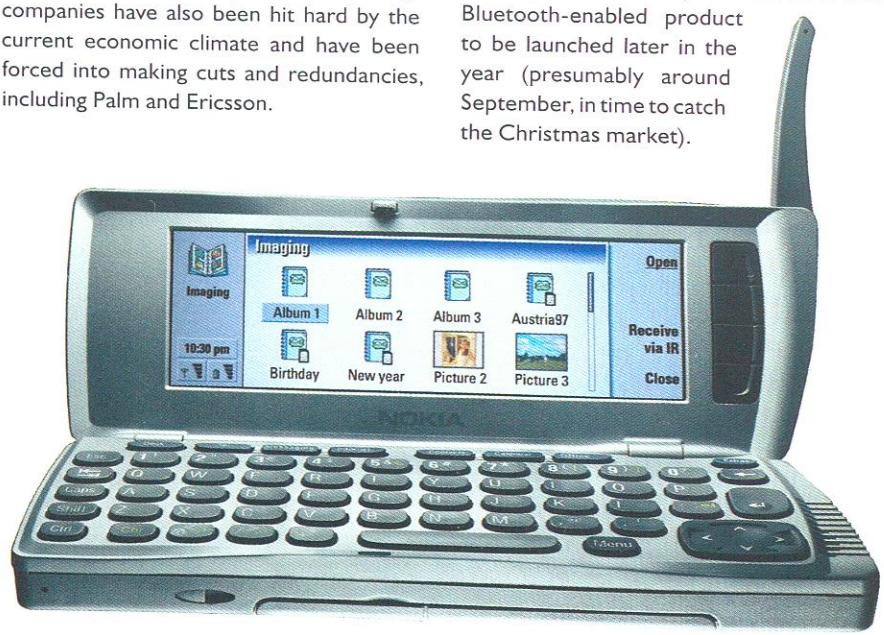
What's new in the world of EPOC and Symbian

What's up at Psion?

As reported in issue 33, Motorola has pulled out of their 'Odin' joint communicator project with Psion. Shortly after going to press, Psion announced that they had "decided not to pursue Odin independently", and were "consequently taking action to reduce costs and will reduce staff levels by 20% in this area". The activities of Psion Computers, Psion Connect and Psion InfoMedia have since been integrated into a single division, Psion Digital Solutions, which hopes to start saving Psion money by Autumn this year. Many other technology companies have also been hit hard by the current economic climate and have been forced into making cuts and redundancies, including Palm and Ericsson.

From a statement by David Potter: "It is expected that sales this year will decline in Psion Computers/Connect. The downsizing of these businesses and their focus on new markets will be challenging. However, it is essential that we tackle that task now so that Psion can re-establish profitable growth more widely."

Quite how the changes in focus will affect the palmtop computer market remains to be seen. Although nothing concrete is known about Psion Digital Solutions' plans for the near future, a Psion spokesperson recently alluded to a new, Bluetooth-enabled product to be launched later in the year (presumably around September, in time to catch the Christmas market).



Sales of Psion palmtops (particularly the Revo range) were relatively strong last year, reportedly more than 500,000 units in all. Psion continues to invest heavily in Symbian, owning 28% of it, with Nokia, Ericsson and Motorola each having 21% and Matsushita, which joined later than the other partners, with the remaining 9%. On paper, Symbian has yet to make a profit, losing £10.4 million in 2000, although with the Nokia 9210 appearing soon and others to follow, 2001 (and certainly 2002) will hopefully see a healthier picture.

www.psion.com

9210 imminent, 9290 for 2002

With both mobile phone and palmtop dealers all gearing up for the arrival of the Nokia 9210 Communicator, we have a special 9 page preview on page 41 of this issue. In addition to the dual-band 9210, Nokia has pre-announced the 9290, operating on the GSM 1900 wavelength for customers in the USA, shipping next year. Other than the frequency difference, the unit should be identical to the 9210.

www.nokia.com

IMAP4 arrives

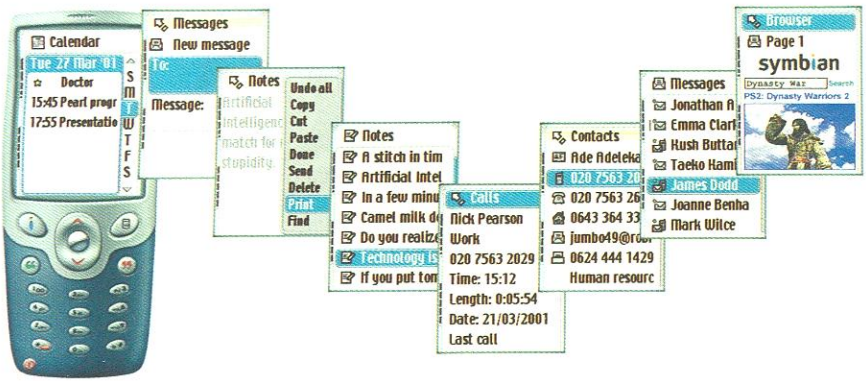
ER5 Email support for IMAP4 protocols (used by many companies) has arrived, albeit through a slightly circuitous route. Sonic Blue, who rebadge the Revo Plus as the Diamond Mako in the USA, have uploaded a 130K IMAP4 plug-in onto their web site. Several readers have reported success with the plug-in on Series 5mx and Revo palmtops.

www.diamondmako.com

Pearls of wisdom

Up to date screenshots of Symbian's 'Smartphone' (the new name for Pearl) reference design, destined for conventional mobile phone form factors, have emerged on the InfoSync web site. The GUI (Graphical User Interface) has been optimized for one-handed use, using function keys, although there's also support for stylus input if needed.

The Smartphone supports screen resolutions from 176x208 pixels up to 240x320 pixels, all in 16-bit colour. There's full support for GSM, GPRS and HSCSD, for wireless communications, as well as infrared,



Bluetooth, serial and USB connectivity. You'll be able to send and receive emails (POP3 and IMAP4), SMS messages and to receive WAP push messages, with everything integrated with the Contacts application.

The design is, surprisingly, extensible, with an application installer, although it remains to be seen how much memory will be available in production devices for storage of new software. Contacts, as on ER5 palmtops, supports the vCard standard, making it possible to beam out and receive contact details from others.

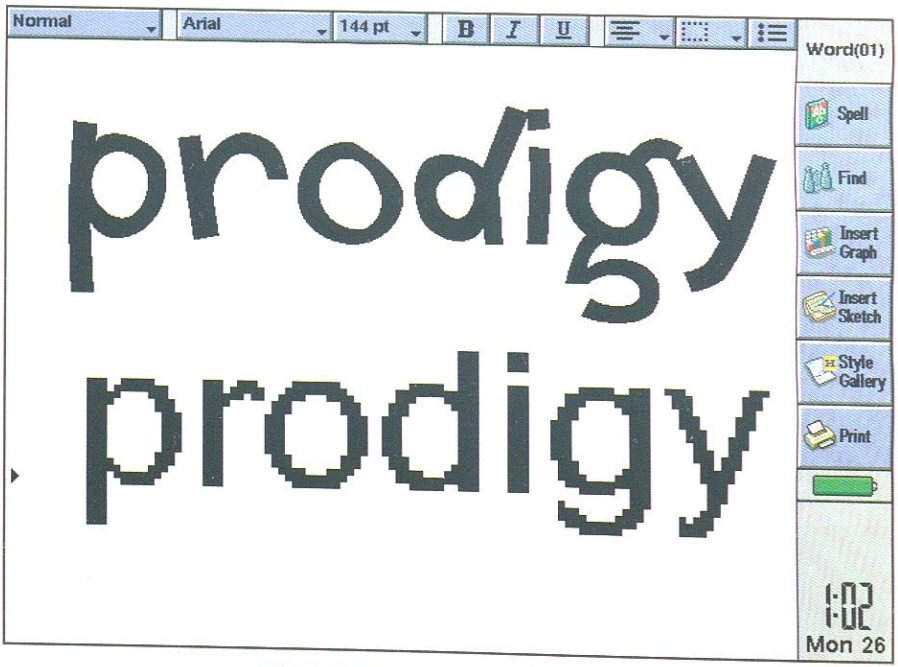
Note, by the way, that the codenames Quartz and Crystal seem also to have been dropped by Symbian, in favour of 'Pen-based Communicator' and 'Keyboard-based Communicator'.

www.infosync.no
www.symbian.com

FontMachine arrives

Revolutionary in concept, mBrain Software has released FontMachine, a scalable font renderer for existing ER5 palmtops. With FontMachine you can use industry standard, scalable fonts, such as True Type and Adobe Type 1, at any size, with applications such as Word, Sheet and Data displaying them perfectly. See page 25 for a full review.

www.mbrainsoftware.com



FontMachine making a difference

Go32 to close down

Following a group stategy review, Purple Technologies Ltd (the parent company of NetMaster Communications, who ran Go32) has decided to close the high profile Go32.com web site on July 18th. In future, Purple plans to focus exclusively on its activities of development and licensing of artificial intelligence-based games for PCs, consoles, wireless devices and interactive television.

www.go32.com

Psion closes down Trivanti

Psion PLC has closed down Trivanti, its joint venture with United Business Media that had been set up in July last year, saying "The mobile data market has not developed as quickly as anticipated, with delays to the implementation of GPRS and a subsequent reduction in investment in wireless content".

PsiWin update

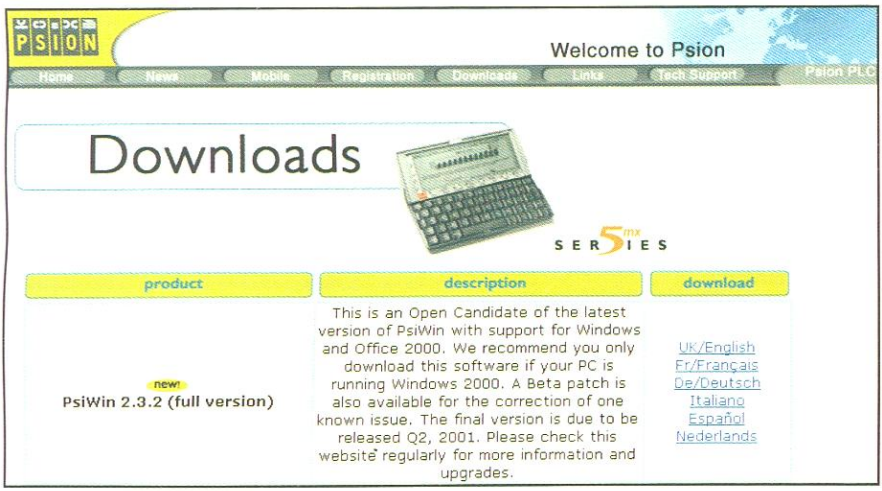
The 'open candidate' of PsiWin 2.3.2 on Psion's web site remains the most current version. Having been in this test state now for over six months, it seems unlikely that any formal release will be made until such time as Psion launch a new hardware product.

www.psion.com/downloads/series5_index.asp

Symbian v6.1 unveiled

Symbian has unveiled version 6.1 of their platform for 2.5G Smartphones and Communicators, featuring fully integrated support for GPRS, WAP 1.2 and advanced Bluetooth. Products incorporating the new operating system are expected to start shipping in the Autumn.

www.symbian.com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This is an Open Candidate of the latest version of PsiWin with support for Windows and Office 2000. We recommend you only download this software if your PC is running Windows 2000. A Beta patch is also available for the correction of one known issue. The final version is due to be released Q2, 2001. Please check this website regularly for more information and upgrades.
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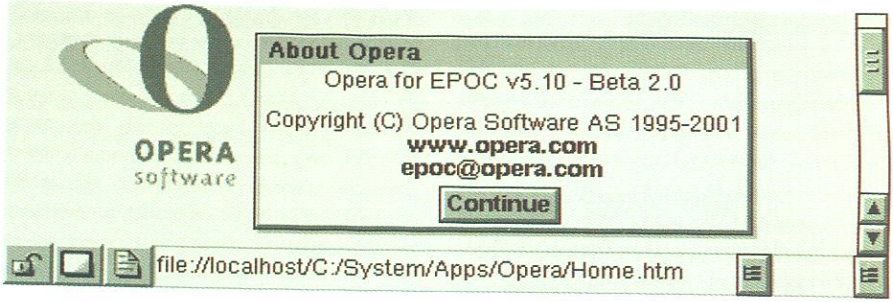


Opera now official at Symbian

Symbian and Opera Software have now agreed to include Opera as the default browser in Symbian's reference designs for its Communicator devices, commenting "We're moving into a market where for millions of users their first experience of accessing the Internet will be from a mobile device. To offer mobile users a compelling multimedia experience we've been evaluating a number of browsers to complement the Symbian OS. Opera Software offers the most advanced specifications and features available in the market today."

Opera version 5 for Symbian (and existing EPOC palmtops, of course) is still in beta test, but includes JavaScript object and form support, SSL handling of certificates, FTP, 128-bit encryption, SSL 2 and 3, Cascading Style Sheets and XML, among other recent standards. We hope to feature a full review of the final release in the next issue of Palmtop.

www.opera.com
www.symbian.com

RealPlayer on the 9210

Nokia and RealNetworks have unveiled Mobile RealPlayer for the 9210 Communicator. RealPlayer supports the Internet's leading streaming audio and video formats.

www.real.com

Citrix available for 9210

Citrix Systems has announced that their ICA client will be available to the Nokia 9210 Communicator. The ICA client will offer corporate 9210 owners access to standard Windows and Unix business applications running on Citrix MetaFrame servers, with the Citrix protocol transporting keystrokes and screen updates between server and client.

www.citrix.com

New picture of Euro-market

Canalys has revealed a new picture of the European mobile device market, releasing the results of its Q1 2001 research. Palm are still the clear market leaders, at 41% (down 10% on Q1 2000), with Compaq in second place with 12% (up 10%). Psion were down in 5th place, at 9% (down 10%). Overall, Palm OS devices accounted for 51% of the

market, Pocket PC for 20% and EPOC for 14%.

Canalys also commented that "Phone handset sales last year were 50 times those of handheld computers, but handhelds are the fastest growing high-technology sector. With the arrival of wireless handhelds and smart phones over the next couple of quarters, these devices will be competing head on in a single mobile device market". Although many people enjoy using a two-box solution, perhaps using infrared, it seems that the simplicity and elegance of a single device (such as the Nokia 9210) is set to dominate in the coming year.

www.canalys.com

Lifetime case guarantee

PalmTec, designers of protective hard cases for Psion (and other) palmtops, are now offering a lifetime guarantee on every case. Irrespective of where and how the case was purchased, customers can sign up for their free Lifetime Guarantee using a secure online form.

https://secure.magic-moments.com/palmtec/warranty.html

AvantGo on the way?

In case the name's new to you, AvantGo is the leading offline news and content system for Palm OS, long hailed as one of the 'killer' applications for that platform. Once a day synchronizations to the Internet are enough to keep the handheld fully up to date with your chosen news and content channels and giving you hundreds of pages to read in odd moments.

It appears that AvantGo may be coming to EPOC in the near future. Buried deep in their web site is the following statement: "AvantGo 4.0 software for Symbian-based devices provides access to applications and content, both wirelessly and off-line, speeding application performance over wireless networks and creating an extraordinary end user experience". It remains to be seen whether they intend the software to run on existing EPOC devices or just future Symbian/ER6 communicators.

www.avantgo.com

Symbian extends CIC license

CIC has mutually agreed with Symbian to support and market CIC's products for the Symbian platform. Covered under this agreement are Jot, WordComplete, Sign-On, QuickNotes and InkTools, all products aimed at keyboardless devices, such as those based on Symbian's Pearl and Quartz reference designs.

www.cic.com

IBM and Symbian

IBM, responsible for the Tivoli, Lotus Notes and DB2 Everyplace corporate applications, has agreed to extend their software to future Symbian communicators, including the Nokia 9210.

www.ibm.com

SyncTalk Professional 2.0

SoDeog Technologies has introduced SyncTalk Professional 2.0, offering expanded capabilities for beaming customised packages of content from EPOC to Palm OS

users. If the recipient doesn't have SyncTalk installed, a trial version can be beamed over ahead of the data and automatically installed on the Palm OS device.

www.synctalk.com

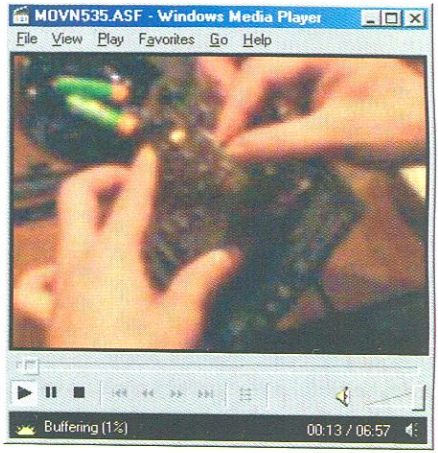
Careful with that screwdriver

Although very obviously amateurishly filmed, a Japanese web site has made available a 14MB movie (in Windows Media Player format) showing how to disassemble and reassemble a Series 5mx. This isn't recommended if your palmtop's still in warranty, but for older machines which have taken a tumble, this footage might be useful. There are also static picture instructions, linked from the same web page.

www.chaos.to/psion/psion-ej/5mxpro-movie/index-en.html

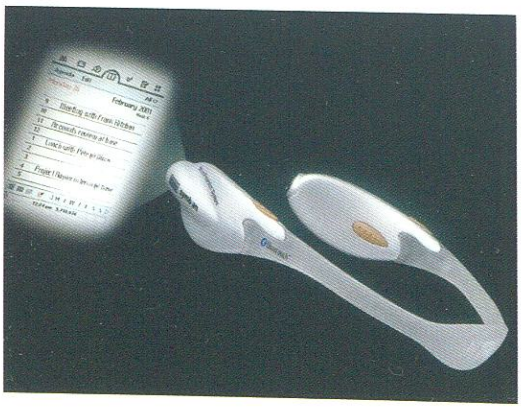
Concept devices

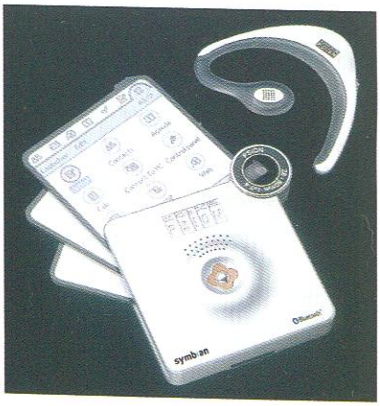
Although possibly several years away from being viable products, Psion has been happily showing off two concept devices at recent trade shows. One is the Ace multi-



screen communicator. This is a PDA with three flip-out LCD screens and an integrated digital camera, with the facility to take part in a video conference call while checking Agenda and looking up material in a large document.

The second device, the Halo, also includes a camera, video facilities, a web browser and PDA functions. But due to its size it has no screen—instead an integrated projector beams the information on to any available surface. Intriguingly, Psion claims that most





of us will use it to view images on the palm of our hands.

www.psion.com

SimCity gets colour patch

Atelier's popular SimCity game has now been patched by a third party, 'Gaz and Chris', to run in colour on the Series 7 and netBook. The patch is neither endorsed nor supported by Atelier Software (*www.ateliersoftware.com*), the game's authors, but it appears to work perfectly, and can be used to colourise any valid copy of SimCity 1.0 upwards.

epoc.2kcode.com

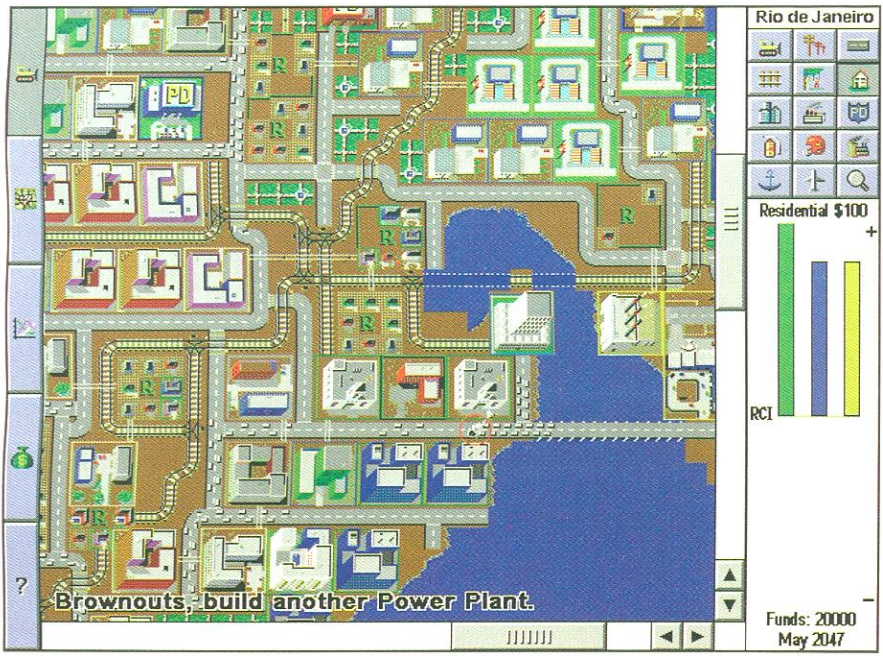
Signa formed

Psion has announced the formation of a new company, Signa Services, to address the market for wireless LAN (WLAN) solutions. This builds on Psion's acquisition of Teklogix, which offers the equipment and consultancy, integration and management services required for a large-scale WLAN deployment.

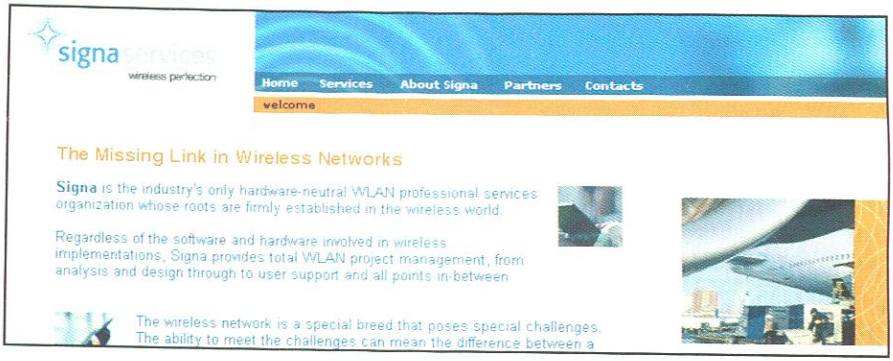
www.signaservices.com

Chinese input system ships

Enfour has announced the release of 'UniFEP TC', a display and input system for Chinese characters using Unicode encoding on ER5 Symbian devices. UniFEP TC is now



You can now play SimCity in full colour in a Series 7 or netBook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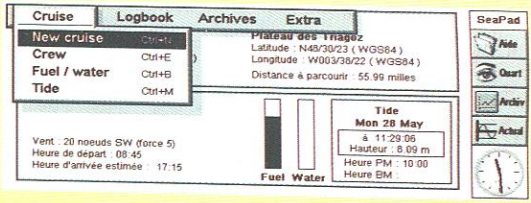
The wireless network is a special breed that poses special challenges. The ability to meet the challenges can mean the difference between a

available as a packaged solution. UniFEP TC allows users to send and receive emails, view Web pages and beam contact information in Chinese. It supports the full Big5 character set with additions of Hong Kong extended characters. Unlike Chinese solutions on other platforms, it also supports the Simplified Chinese character set as used in mainland China.

www.enfour.com/psion/uftc.html

Getting nautical...

There is a lack of a nautical logbook running on EPOC. The Psion Nautical Site (*p.pellot.free.fr*) is ready to supervise the implementation of such a program, to be made available as freeware. One can imagine a user-friendly interface as suggested by the screenshot presented here. About half the work is already done and, with some help, a beta version could be released for tests during the summer.



If you are interested in using such a program, and can help to provide some helpful routines or comments, please contact *jean-yves.pontailler@eco.u-psud.fr.*

INDUSTRY NEWS

In this regular feature we devote a single page to what's happening in the non-EPOC sector of mobile computing...

New technology is set to enhance the capabilities of future mobile device display units. OEL (organic electroluminescence) technology will allow for slimmer displays that cope well with fast moving graphical images. A primary benefit of OEL is that backlighting is not necessary—hence the displays will consume less power than conventional LCD screens. Toshiba and Sony have been quick off the mark to make use of OEL, with the former already having developed a prototype 72mm flat monochrome display and Sony a 13" full colour 800x600 OEL display. Although in the early stages of development, analysts are predicting that the OEL market will become very lucrative within the next four years.

Microsoft has celebrated the first anniversary of the Pocket PC with the release of the first service pack (SP1). Although it does not include any new features or functionality, a number of fixes are included for those who use the web or corporate Intranet regularly. Microsoft forecasts that the mobile device industry will continue to experience steady growth, with the Pocket PC platform currently claiming an estimated 16.5% of the handheld market.

Palm's vision for the future includes an emphasis on expansion. As well as adding Bluetooth capability to future devices, the company is employing SD (Secure Digital) card expansion slots in their new m500/m505 models to enhance data protection and enable faster connectivity rates. The m500 is monochrome, and the m505 uses a 16-bit frontlit colour screen.

TRG Products, manufacturer of the TRGpro organiser, has announced that it is rebranding its range of products. The company's new strategy also includes a name change, to HandEra. Their first product is the HandEra 330, innovative for its use of a higher resolution LCD screen, 'soft' Graffiti handwriting area, jog dial/button and a voice recording and playback system.

Andy Nott

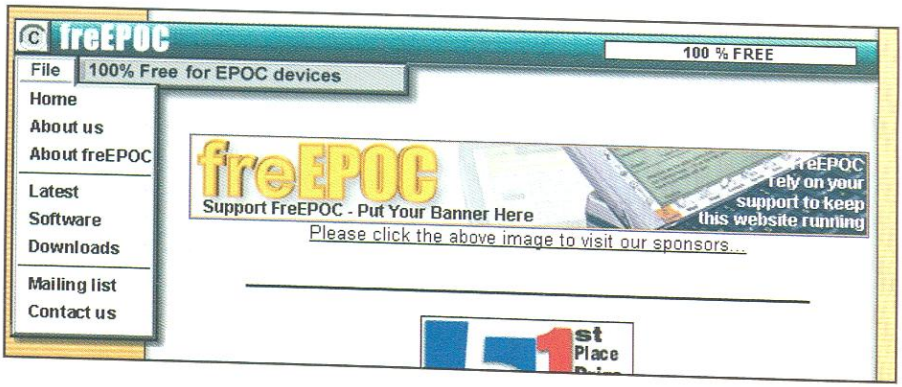
Shareware Shorts

Steve Litchfield, maintainer of the Palmtop/3-Lib CD-ROM, takes a look at the latest additions to the world of shareware...

When is shareware not shareware? When it's freeware, of course. The world of shareware has been around so long that the term is often used loosely to cover freeware, shareware and restricted commercial demo versions, as well as such developer-created oddities as bannerware, postcardware, smileware, charityware, and so on.

Despite this lax definition, there's still no excuse for my mention of Graph32 in the previous issue as 'shareware'. Being from FreEPOC, it's of course freeware and I duly consider my wrist slapped for the error. This does however present an opportune moment to give FreEPOC a further moment in the spotlight.

There's something very liberating about freeware. Quite apart from the obvious fact that it doesn't cost anything to carry on using, there's an extra freedom that comes from passing it on to others. When copying over a shareware application to a friend, you have to go through the "By the way, this is shareware, if you want to do the honest thing and get rid of the nag screens..." speech, which can be confusing and intimi-



dating to a novice. With freeware, you just copy and say, "Take it, it's free".

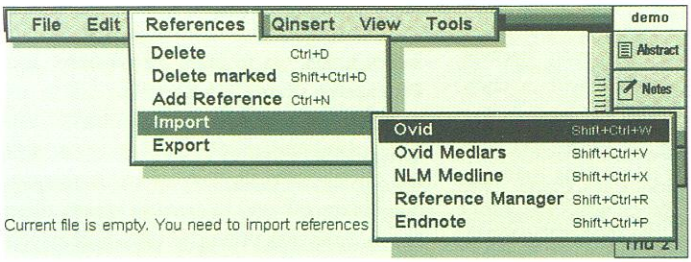
Everything from FreEPOC is freeware, with some programs even including source code, should you want to see how they work or make some improvements yourself. The FreEPOC software house includes around a dozen programmers, some of whom write exclusively for FreEPOC and some of whom have other, shareware products, released under different banners. Many of the FreEPOC programs have been mentioned before in this column, with some of the real stars being ABP (the super money manager), Clock5 (a multi-function clock/screen-saver), EPOCSync (synchronizes two Psions, or a Psion and the emulator), Quad and Vexed (two very good strategy games), Solun (an astronomy suite) and VoiceMan5 (manager for Series 5 voice recordings).

You can find all of these, and more, at *www.freepoc.org*—and it won't cost a penny!

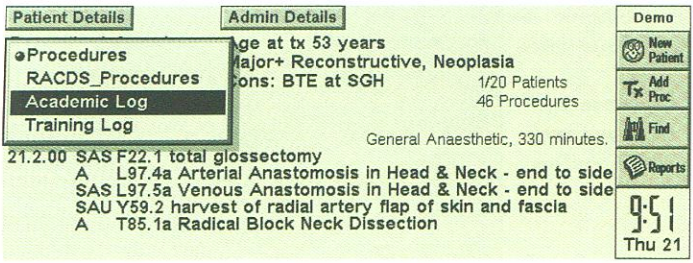
Medic natters

Another pecialist software consortium is also in e news. **Palmaris**, devoted to medical software for EPOC, has released the shareware applications Qcite and sLOG. Qcite is aimed at the medical researcher, acting as an aid to collating, reviewing and annotating studies and references. It can be used to help write your paper, organise all references in your review article or simply for browsing offline references downloaded from the web. Import and export facilities include Reference Manager, Endnote, the National Library of Medicine Medline search engine, the Grateful Med Medline search engine, Ovid and any others that offer Medline/Medlars text export.

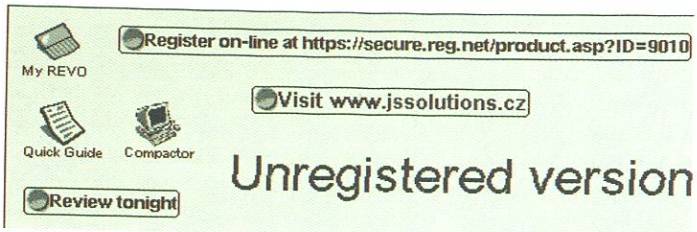
sLOG is branded "The ultimate logbook for surgical trainees". If you're training in any surgical speciality, you know the requirement to keep a log of all your cases for presentation at regular assessments. sLOG allows you to log surgical cases, analyse



Qcite aids medical research



Keeping track of your cases in sLOG



Now it's WinEPOC's turn to emulate a desktop interface

the data and (optionally) export it to a PC or Macintosh.

www.palmaris.com

Windows desktop?

Mimicking the Windows PC desktop is **Jakub Smolik**'s shortcut utility WinEPOC, offering instant access to applications, documents and another functions. In the registered version you can also experiment with different background images and turn on/turn off sound effects.

www.jssolutions.cz

Back to DOS

Gavin Lewarne will have you harking back at least a generation, with a fairly comprehensive MS-DOS command line interpreter. EpocDos is freeware and includes commands for text editing, memory defragmenting, task automation, file comparison, file management, hexadecimal viewing, application launching and mathematical expression evaluation. Like later versions of MS-DOS, there's even command line history, for you to recall commonly used commands.

www.geocities.com/silicon_psychosis

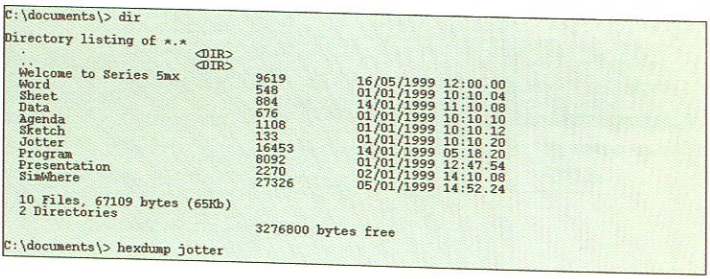
More printer drivers

Updates and new printer drivers continue to flow from the keyboard of **Andrew Johnson**. New in particular is one for Canon Extended Mode.

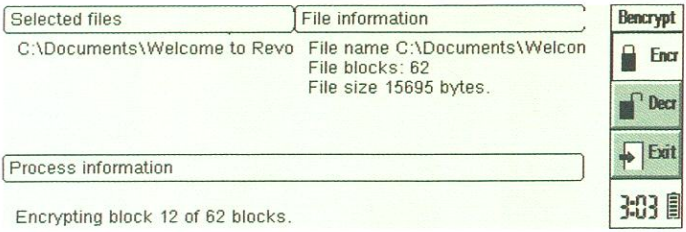
www.aps.anl.gov/~anj/bjc80/cxm.html

Encryption part one

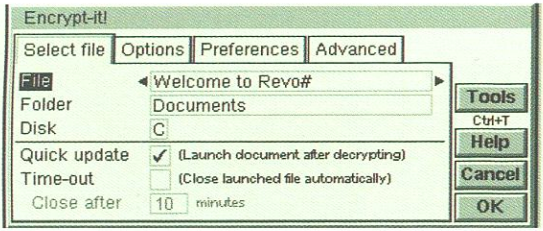
Every utility has to start somewhere, and **Novateh**'s shareware Bencrypt starts off very slowly. Its strength is that it can encrypt a confidential EPOC document with 128-bit (i.e. virtually unbreakable) security, depending on the password length used, but it does everything so slowly that you



A glimpse into a bygone age, with EpocDos



Encryption in progress in Bencrypt



About to tuck away a file with Encrypt-it!

may want to look elsewhere until things have been optimised. After encrypting, the original file is automatically deleted and a Bencrypt icon placed against the filename on the system screen. Decryption is unfortunately just as slow as encryption, with a 30 second wait to get into even a small 10K document.

www.novatch.com

Encryption part two

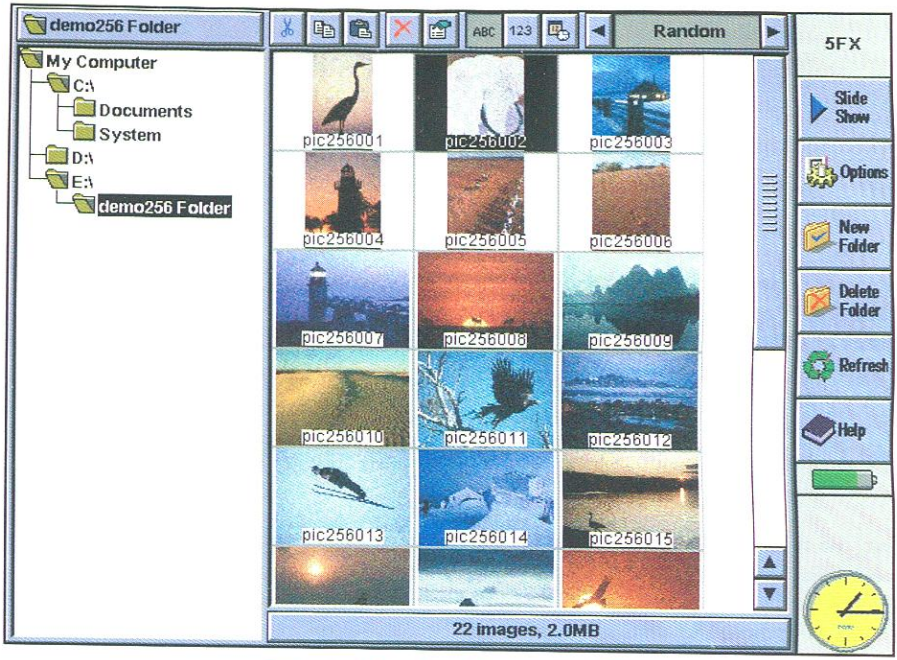
With an almost identical remit but far more mature is **PocketIQ**'s shareware Encrypt-it! This has recently received a major update (to version 4.0) and is so fast that for small files it's difficult to time its encryption and decryption speed (the developers claim around 30K per second). There are a wealth of options and tie-ins to other well-known third party applications, ensuring that Encrypt-it! can work with them transparently. In addition to a multi-tab facelift, Encrypt-it! now wipes the relevant portion of a Psion disk as well as deleting a file's FAT entry, ensuring that your unencrypted version is safe from would-be crackers with low-level tools. It's also now fully compatible with the Series 7 and netBook.

www.pocketiq.com

Special FX

5FX is a slick variation on the old MBM image file viewer. Shareware from **StamPark**, 5FX includes a folder browser and thumbnail facility, although the latter can take a while when accessing a folder for the first time. There are a mountain of viewing and slide show options, including the facility to write your own transition modules using standard OPL code. StamPark's web site includes half a dozen pre-compiled transition modules though, which should be enough for anyone.

www.stampark.co.uk

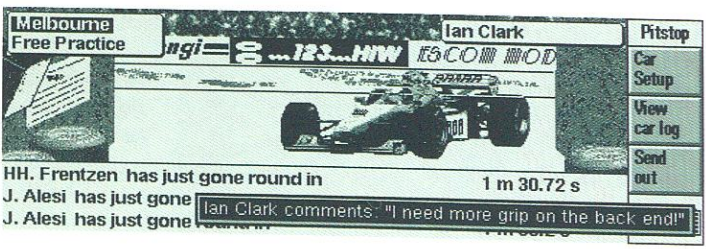


Browsing thumbnail images in 5FX

Time for a pitstop

A shareware development of my old Team Psion grand prix strategy game for the Series 5, Pitstop is purely for the Revo and Revo Plus, giving you the chance to manage a grand prix team through a season, setting up cars for practice, qualifying and then guiding your drivers through each race. Despite graphics scaled down for the smaller screen and slightly fewer sound effects, the gameplay is hopefully even better, with two years of fine tuning and feedback having gone into the racing algorithms. As a Formula One fan, I've tried to make Pitstop as true to reality as possible. Starting up and running a team is difficult in the real world, and I've tried to reflect this in the game.

3lib.ukonline.co.uk



Become an F1 team manager in Pitstop

Internet Movie Database

FEATURED UPDATE!

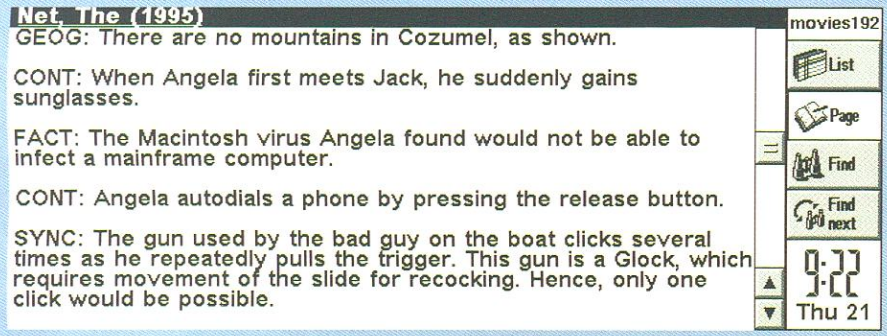
Although not strictly an application, running as a database within TomeRaider (see the feature on page 75), I've been impressed by the Internet Movie Database. When PalmTop Software released the excellent Halliwell's Film and Video Guide and then failed to update it since 1998, many people in the EPOC world were disappointed at being unable to keep up to date with new releases.

Whereas the last version of Halliwell's covered movies up to Spring 1998, the Internet Movie Database project on the Web is always bang up-to-date. The folks behind TomeRaider then take the raw database each month and crunch it down into the TR format, ready for download.

Having a spare 12MB, I decided to load the most detailed version onto my CF disk, covering 30,000 movies since 1920 and including ratings, director, actors, running time, tag lines, plot summaries, goofs and trivia. Several smaller versions are also available, with more recent date cut-offs and less detail.

All entries have been submitted over the years by film fans such as you and I, and reading through the trivia and goof submissions for your favourite films is quite absorbing and highly recommended.

www.memoware.com


Net, The (1995)
GEOG: There are no mountains in Cozumel, as shown.
CONT: When Angela first meets Jack, he suddenly gains sunglasses.
FACT: The Macintosh virus Angela found would not be able to infect a mainframe computer.
CONT: Angela autodials a phone by pressing the release button.
SYNC: The gun used by the bad guy on the boat clicks several times as he repeatedly pulls the trigger. This gun is a Glock, which requires movement of the slide for recocking. Hence, only one click would be possible.
movies192
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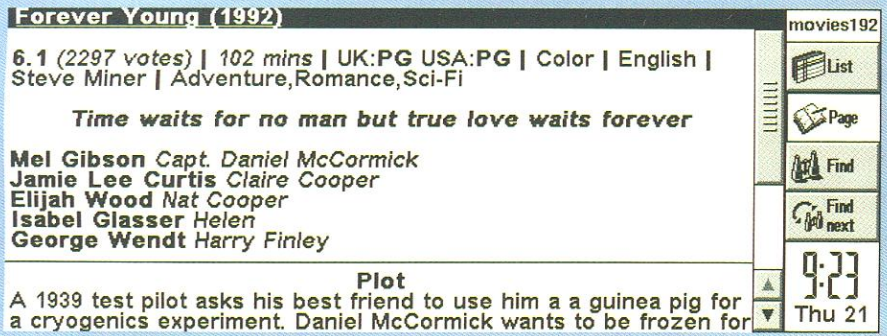
Forever Young (1992)
6.1 (2297 votes) | 102 mins | UK:PG USA:PG | Color | English | Steve Miner | Adventure,Romance,Sci-Fi
Time waits for no man but true love waits forever
Mel Gibson Capt. Daniel McCormick
Jamie Lee Curtis Claire Cooper
Elijah Wood Nat Cooper
Isabel Glasser Helen
George Wendt Harry Finley
Plot
A 1939 test pilot asks his best friend to use him a a guinea pig for a cryogenics experiment. Daniel McCormick wants to be frozen for
movies192
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nConvert finalised

Neuon's nConvert, much covered in Palmtop in recent issues, has at last been formally released and is no longer in 'beta'. Now with 22 conversion routines covering a wide range of file formats, nConvert is an immensely capable tool for Psion-based file conversion.

www.neuon.com

Better GPS

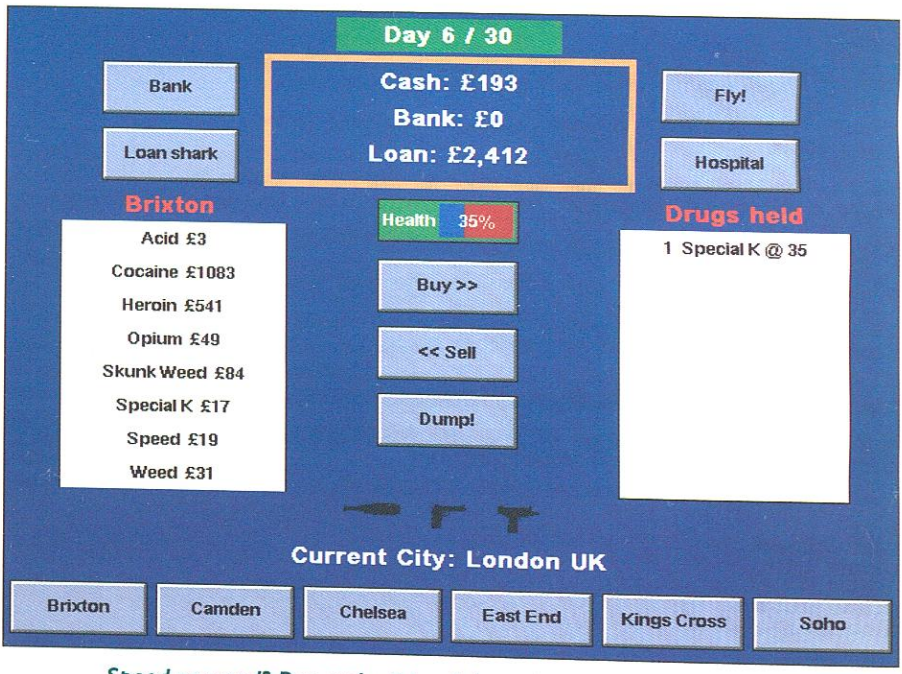
We don't normally cover minor updates to commercial software here, but several readers have alerted us that PalmTop Software, now TomTom, have fixed the problems some people were having with their Palmtop GPS software. The symptom was that a Psion sometimes failed to detect the Palmtop GPS and the fixed version of the module (1.6) is now available online.

www.palmtop.nl/support/download_gps.html

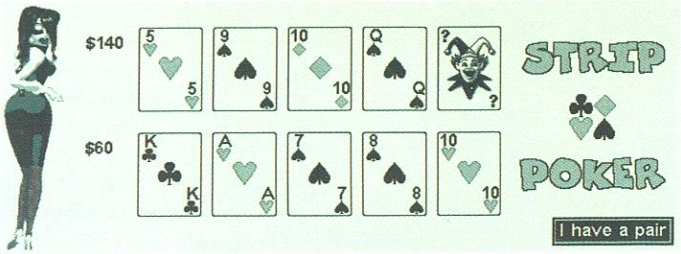
Dopewars

Focussing on the more unsavoury side of life is the shareware Dopewars, from the people at **Palmanac**. Only available for the Series 7 and netBook as we go to press, and derived from the strategy classic (apparently) of Drug Wars, this sees you buying and selling drugs for profit, while battling against 'rival gangs and crazed junkies'.

www.palmanac.co.uk



Speed or weed? Buy and sell hard drugs in Palmanac's Dopewars



StripPoker plays quite a hard game

Adults only?

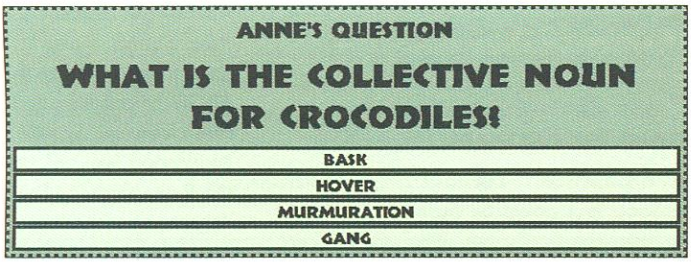
It seems that EPOC content is slowly creeping towards the seedy side of town. Hot on the heels of Dopewars comes the freeware StripPoker, from **King Midas**. Every time either you or the girl dealer lose $100, another piece of clothing has to come off. The poker engine is simple but quite hard to beat, and is spiced up nicely with a joker feature, which automatically represents the card which will give you the highest possible hand. And in case you were wondering, you're more likely to get hot under the collar about the game's aggressive poker hands than the cartoon nudity.

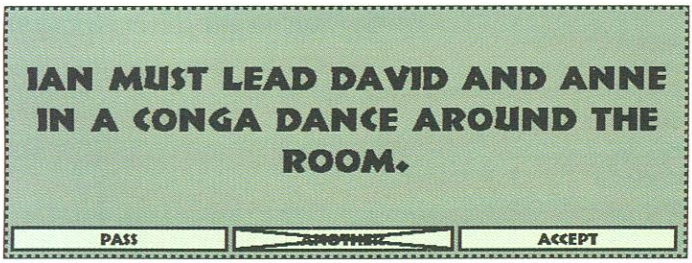
www.mypsion.ru

MondoPondo

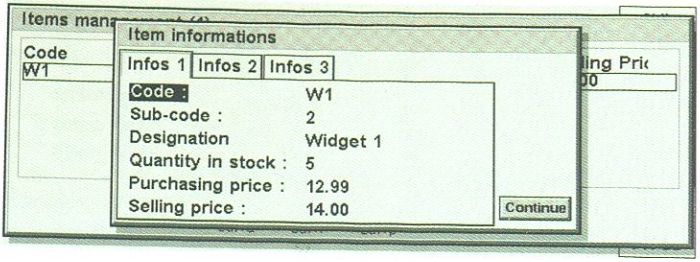
The most hyped game in the Psion world? The newsgroups have been awash recently with the fallout from promotional messages for this shareware quiz game by PalmTec. It's true that MondoPondo's concept is original, especially for a palmtop-based game, and it's nicely presented and implemented throughout. There's a sophisticated quiz

Starting out with a question...





Getting it wrong in '16+' mode provokes one of the (tamer) dares



PsiShop offers some powerful business tools

engine that can throw up many more questions than you'd imagine possible, including re-wording previous questions, and the linking comments and put-downs are random and usually funny.

It requires two or more players (the more the better), and with every wrong answer comes a 'truth or dare', of the type designed to open up conversation and break the ice at parties. MondoPondo runs in three possible modes. '16+' is designed for adults but staying within the bounds of decency. More adventurous are 'X' and 'XXX', in which the dares become so outrageous that the game's use is best left to the imagination...

www.palmtec.com

Open for business

Jean-Baptiste Lernout's shareware PsiShop is a powerful business and stock management application. You can enter sales just as in a cash register, perhaps printing off dated reports at a later date, and there's a complete item management system. You can also manage your suppliers (and the items they supply) and your customers (and what they buy). Rounding it off, an analysis module creates a business report in a few seconds, with several graphs, and you can even print off business invoices.

Also worthy of note are the built-in Euro converter, backup and restore options (which allow you to save all business information in a single snapshot file and restore from the snapshot at any time) and the use of up to three VAT rates throughout. PsiShop is able to manage up to 50 businesses, each of which can cope with 30,000 items, 30,000 suppliers, 30,000 customers and several years of sales. PsiShop is available in English and French.

www.ifrance.com/jbler

Sounding off

Also by the aforementioned **King Midas** is Revo Sound, a tiny little player utility that associates itself with the document UID for EPOC sound files and can therefore play them from the System screen. The Record application was, of course, omitted from the Revo range by Psion, whose marketing department must be feeling rather frustrated now that virtually all the functionality they removed from the Series 5mx standard has been put back in for free by third parties!

www.mypsion.ru

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts, shareware is often supplied for use on a 30 day trial basis. If you like the software you are asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are freeware and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

Where can I find it?

One way to get any of these programs is from the Internet. If you've got access to the web then there are several on-line indices (e.g. at *www.epocsoftware.com*) which link directly to the relevant author download page concerned. Things are just as easy if you haven't got Internet access: as long as the program has been out for a few months, you should find a copy on the latest edition of the Palmtop CD-ROM, indexed into the appropriate category.

How do I use it?

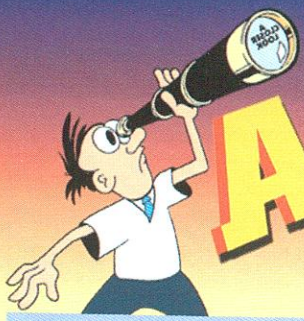
Once you've found the file you want, there are three steps you may need to take:

1. Decompress the file, if necessary. Most applications on our Palmtop CD will already have been decompressed for you, but those on the Internet will almost certainly be 'zipped', to save bandwidth. If you've never seen a ZIP file before, install an unzipping utility onto your desktop or palmtop computer. For PC users, the most common is WinZIP (which can be found on most PC magazine CD cover disks); for Macintosh users, try ZipIt; for EPOC itself, get RMRZip (from *www.rmrsoft.com*). Once installed, you can double-click on any downloaded ZIP file and it will be automatically expanded into its component parts.
2. Examine the files available. Most programs come with a welcoming README.TXT file, which you can read in any text editor or word processor. This should explain how to install the application and how to register it. Sometimes the latter is described inside the program's help screens instead. Well-behaved EPOC applications come as one or more SIS files, e.g. 'mygame.sis'. These can be double-clicked on to install them directly using a serial (PsiWin) link to your palmtop. If you experience problems at this stage, it's worth noting that you can also copy SIS files onto your palmtop and double-tap on them there instead, from the System screen.
3. The newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar. Press the 'Extras' application icon to check and to launch the software.

Shareware availability

Please note that, by definition, many of the latest items featured in Shareware Shorts will *not* appear on existing Palmtop CDs, but on subsequent pressings of the disk. If you wish to receive every edition of the CD then see page 122 for details. To find the latest version of the programs mentioned here, go to the relevant author's web site as given in the text.

The vast majority of EPOC applications mentioned in Shareware Shorts run properly on the Psion Series 7/netBook, Series 5/5mx, Revo/Revo Plus/Diamond Mako and compatibles, unless otherwise stated. If a program misbehaves on *your* EPOC computer, check the author's web site first and then email them if necessary.



A Closer Look

...at some of the newest and most interesting products for your palmtop

Star Ratings:

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Fair
★☆☆☆☆ Poor
☆☆☆☆☆ Dismal

Interpreting reviews

Quality: the *Quality* star rating reflects how well the product works, whether it includes all the features you'd expect, whether the interface is consistent and easy to use, and in data-based software products it also reflects the quality of the information contained in the program.

Value: the *Value* star rating reflects the value for money of the product, taken within the context of what the program (or other product) does. Therefore a simple utility program will be rated differently to a sophisticated application at the same price.

Does it work on my palmtop?

Items reviewed should work with the Psion Revo and Revo Plus/Diamond Mako, Series 5/5mx, Series 7/netBook and Ericsson MC218 unless otherwise specified, though some programs may not currently support colour or utilise the full screen size of the Series 7 and netBook.

Programs *may* run on the Oregon Scientific Osaris, though part of the display may be clipped due to the Osaris' smaller 320x200 pixel screen. Osaris users should always consult the program developer before purchasing.

FontMachine 25
plBeam 29
Task Manager 31
Business Warrior 35
V-Rally 38
LomeWood DeskBox 40
Nokia 9210 41

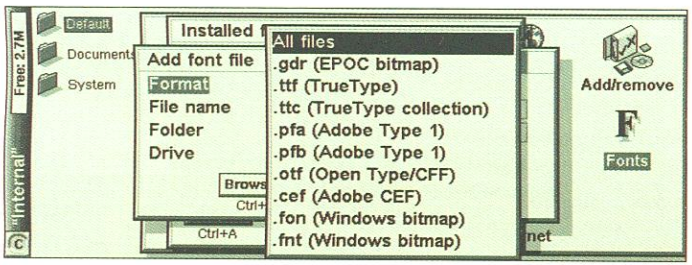
FontMachine

Arial, Courier New and Times New Roman are names that will be familiar to all EPOC users: they're the names of the built-in fonts. They cover three basic font types (sans serif, monospaced and serif, respectively) and are clear, easy to read and adequate for most uses. But have you ever looked at a desktop computer's huge range of fonts and wanted to use these on EPOC as well? With mBrain Software's FontMachine you can.

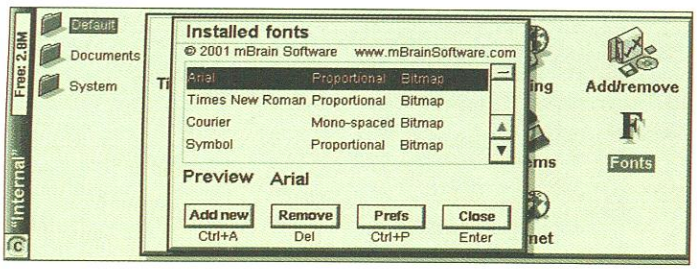
FontMachine adds the ability to load new fonts into EPOC. It uses an existing font engine (from *www.freetype.org*) and hooks into EPOC to make the new fonts available to all applications. It works with all ER5 palmtops, such as the Revo and 5mx.

Installing FontMachine is a little more involved than with most EPOC applications, as your palmtop must be given a soft reset afterwards, so you should first save all your work, quit all applications and then do a precautionary backup. Once installation is finished, you will have a new entry, Fonts, in your Control Panel. This is where you interact with FontMachine. It initially lists only the built-in fonts (including several that you don't normally see as they're hidden away and used by applications such as Calc). To add a new font, simply tap on 'Add' and select the new font file from the resulting dialog. The font will be installed and shown in the font list, and will be immediately available in other applications. You can also remove fonts, either temporarily (until the next reset) or permanently.

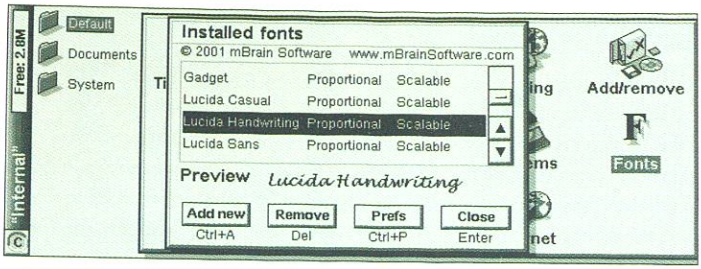
Most applications can show text in different fonts. Some, such as Word, have a font list in the top toolbar that you can select from. Others, such as Email, can only show one font at once, changed from within a 'Preferences' dialog. And in many applications, even if there's no obvious visual indication, you can use [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[F] to bring up a font selector.



Installing a new font



Some built-in EPOC fonts (in the 'Fonts' control panel)...



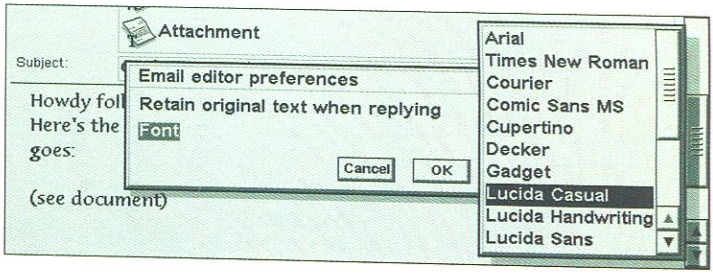
...and some newly-installed fonts

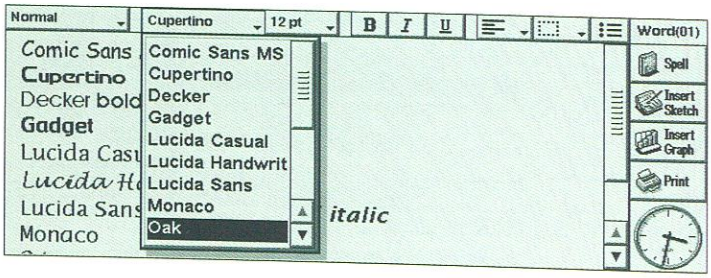
Displaying scalable fonts (see below) takes a little more processing power than normal, but I couldn't detect any difference in speed on my Series 5mx. FontMachine itself takes up about 200K of disk space, though you'll also need to allow space for the fonts you install, which can range from a few kilobytes to a few hundred kilobytes each.

The world of fonts is a complex one, and there are a number of possible scenarios to consider, depending on your printer type. The built-in 'General' printer driver does not allow the use of extra fonts, for example—the 'Fax' driver is probably your best bet to be able to view and use your new fonts on screen.

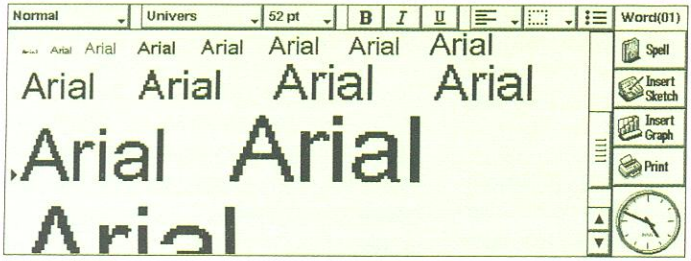
Of course, for FontMachine to be anything other than an on-screen visual feast, you'll want to be able to print out what you see. FontMachine works with the built-in 'Print via PC' driver to some extent, but only allows the use of fonts added via PsiWin. The other built-in printer drivers all allow you to select and print extra fonts, with the caveat that these drivers have the same issues (bugs) that they're renowned for. The new range of printer drivers from Andrew Johnson (*www.aps.anl.gov/~anj*) produce

Setting my preferred editor font in Email...

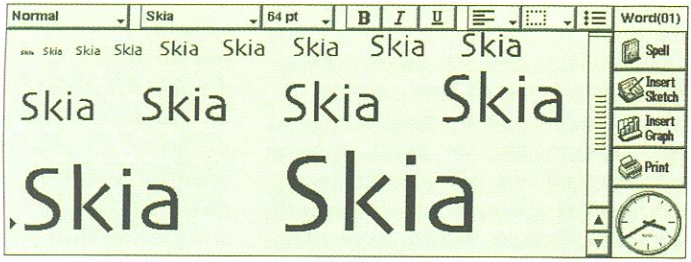




...and in Word



Bitmap fonts get blocky at large point sizes...



...but scalable fonts still look smooth

mixed results—the PCL5 driver allows you to use scalable fonts but the Canon Bubblejet and PostScript drivers do not.

FontMachine can use most common font types, with TrueType, Adobe, OpenType, Windows and EPOC fonts all supported.

There are two basic categories of fonts: 'bitmap' fonts, such as the built-in EPOC ones, are stored as a simple bitmap image for each point size. As a result, they are very efficient, but are only available at specific point sizes. EPOC will 'zoom in' bitmap fonts when it needs a point size larger than any stored, but this leads to an unpleasant 'blocky' style (see the screenshot at the top of this page). The other category of font is 'scalable': instead of storing bitmap images, these store the instructions for drawing each character, in terms of straight lines and curves. This means that displaying characters takes slightly longer, but can be done smoothly at any point size, even very large ones (see the second screenshot above). Most of the fonts you'll find, such as TrueType or Adobe types, are scalable.

FontMachine recognises fonts by the font name. This means that it gets confused if you install a font with the same name as a built-in font. It also means that you can install normal, bold, italic and/or bold italic versions of a font, and applications will handle these attributes correctly. (If the separate versions are not installed, trying to make normal text bold or italic will have no visible effect.)

The easiest place to get fonts from is your desktop computer. Both Windows and Mac OS desktops come with many TrueType fonts (such as Book Antiqua, Symbol, Tahoma, Verdana, Chicago and Geneva, among many others). There are also *thousands* of fonts available on the Internet, many of them free or shareware. My personal favourites are Lucida Casual and Lucida Sans; Gadget also works well, as it's very heavy (heavier fonts, or fonts with

a bold variant, seem to work best on a PDA screen, at least at smaller point sizes). As well as displaying text, fonts such as Symbol or Wingdings let you use completely new characters and symbols.

As usual, pressing [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[C] usually brings up a list of accented and other characters, but beware, as not all fonts include some of these special characters, so some might appear as an empty square.

Basic PsiWin conversions between EPOC Word and Sheet and their counterparts (Word and Excel) on the desktop seem to work, with the new font selections being preserved, although with so many possible combinations of font, drivers, desktop software and Windows version, more adventurous conversions may take you into familiar trial-and-error territory.

There are a few issues with using FontMachine, all of which the developers are aware of and are looking into. EPOC has an inherent limit on the number of fonts it can use, a number which is easily hit when using FontMachine. In Sheet, FontMachine makes the row and column labels appear in a random font. I also found that occasionally a font face would get 'confused', such as Arial 10pt appearing much larger, requiring a soft reset to cure the problem.

Another issue is that, once installed, the font files remain 'open' all the time, which can present a problem if you store them on a removable drive such as a CompactFlash card. Some applications, such as CheckDisk from Essential Disk Utilities, need exclusive access to a disk and can't run if there are open files, and in any case it's bad practice to remove a disk with open files and use it on another palmtop, as it can result in corruption. The easy solution is simply to store all font files on the internal (C:) drive.

Uninstalling FontMachine is also a little tricky: you have to move or delete the '\System\Fonts\FontMachine.dll' file and then do a soft reset to disable it before you attempt to uninstall.

Despite the problems above, FontMachine works very smoothly and adds useful new functionality to EPOC. With the right fonts, you can squeeze far more information into the small screen without sacrificing legibility. You can also give your text different moods and styles, you can make Agenda entries stand out, with the right symbols you can greatly simplify things like taking directions, and you can often print out exactly what you see on screen. The actual rendering is very good, making text clear even at tiny point sizes and with even large characters looking very smooth.

This is not a 'vital' application—I could continue to use my Psion perfectly well without it. But it adds an eye-catching new look to most applications. In short, I found FontMachine well worth both the purchase cost and the effort spent in setting it up.

Andrew Giddings

FontMachine

From: mBrain Software (www.mBrainSoftware.com)

Availability: Now

Price: £15 + VAT

Quality ★★★★☆

Value ★★★½☆

plBeam

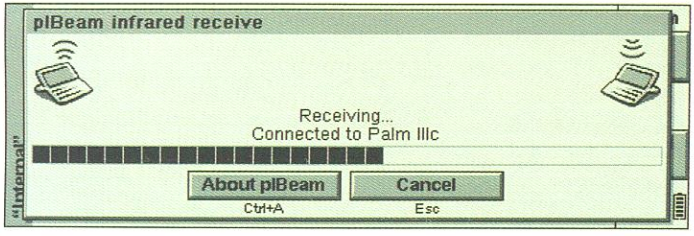
Getting different computers talking the same language is a perennial problem, especially when you start involving palmtops running totally different operating systems. Even the presence of various standards doesn't always help—in the field of infrared, the labels 'IrDA', 'IrCOMM' and 'IrOBEX' aren't enough to guarantee success. And the more 'cutting edge' a computer manufacturer is, the more likely they are to fall foul of some standard or other that's still evolving. For example, Psion implemented infrared beaming and printing in their Series 3c, back in 1996, but weren't able to conform fully to the relevant IrDA standard because it hadn't been finalised when the 3c was launched.

Fast forward a few years and the new IrOBEX file and object exchange standard was implemented on Psion's ER5 palmtops, the Series 5mx and later the Revo and Revo Plus. Again, the timing seemed unfortunate, with ER5's version of IrOBEX slightly short of the full, ratified standard. Still, the beaming of single Agenda or Contacts entries usually worked satisfactorily, to other handheld or laptop users, be they EPOC, Palm OS or Windows. And for many people, that's all that's needed.

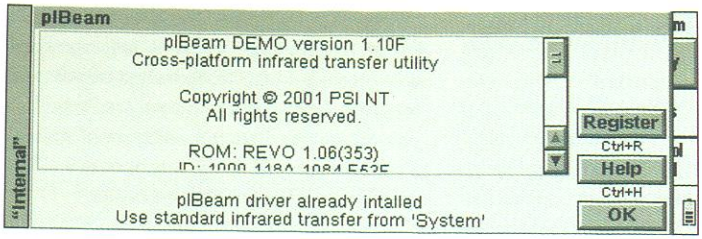
However, it's both a rather negative testament to PsiWin and a comment on the market leadership of Palm, that PSI NT have created plBeam. This extends EPOC's IrOBEX support to the full standard, allowing individual files to be beamed to (and received from) other computers. Whether you might need such a utility is of course a purely personal thing, but here are a few situations where it might be useful.

Say you're visiting a colleague and want to give him or her a copy of an EPOC Word file. You spot an infrared port on their Windows 2000 PC. You fire up Neuon's nConvert (*www.neuon.com*) to prepare a version of your document in Microsoft Word 97 format and then send it via infrared using plBeam. No need to install PsiWin and risk messing up their desktop, and no need to ferret around for a serial cable. Or perhaps you bump into a Palm-owning colleague and take a shine to a collection of FAQs stored in their Memo Pad application. Ask your colleague to beam over the entire Memo Pad category and the entries will be streamed into a single text file on your Psion palmtop.

Or you could take advantage of the fact that Palm DOC etexts and PDB databases can now be viewed on a Psion (courtesy of EBook and PdbRead), meaning that you can again ask for copies of the relevant reference files from a colleague's Palm organiser, confident that you can open them up under EPOC. (EBook is from *www.geocities.com/ebookepoc* and PdbRead from *www.palmaris.com*).



Receiving a large reference category from a colleague's Palm OS Memo Pad



Just after upgrading my Revo's infrared with plBeam

Of course, there are some fundamental limits to what can be done by simple file transfer between largely incompatible operating systems. For example, there's no point beaming any kind of EPOC or generic file *to* a Palm handheld, as Palm OS only recognises items in its own formats.

plBeam simply takes over the infrared 'Send/Receive' command icon—you can effectively just treat it as an infrared 'upgrade'. Alternatively, you can launch it from the Extras bar, selecting files from a browser dialog instead. Either way, once installed (in English, Polish or Dutch) you have direct infrared file transfer capability to computers running Windows 2000, Windows Millennium and Palm OS. You can probably add Windows 95 and 98 to that list as well, provided the appropriate infrared device drivers have been installed on the PC.

Pocket PC (the new name for Windows CE) is a notable omission, although with the aid of the Pocket PC third party utility PeaceMaker (*www.conduits.com*) you can transfer limited amounts of plain text.

In addition to file transfer, and in accordance with the full IrOBEX specification, plBeam also handles beamed text. For example, beamed Palm OS Memo Pad pages or categories are received as a .TXT file in C:\Documents and beamed .TXT files (on the Psion) end up as new Memo Pad entries on the Palm. The latter's 4K limit per entry is simply handled by splitting the text across several consecutive entries.

The online help, which can be accessed either when receiving files on the System screen or when running plBeam from the Extras bar, is virtually a carbon copy of the main plBeam web page, but it's reasonably informative and includes a small troubleshooting FAQ.

Despite both being a specialist utility and being hampered by limitations in the operating systems it talks to, plBeam is still well worth trying out. And because it includes EPOC's existing infrared functionality and assumes control of the same command icon, you won't even know it's installed until you need it.

Steve Litchfield

plBeam

From: PSI NT (www.psiloc.com)

Availability: Now (various languages)

Price: $20, shareware

Quality ★★★★½

Value ★★★½☆

Task Manager

Task Manager is not so much a means to manage your tasks, in the sense of a To-do list, as a means to manage your *time*. Although the first step in using Task Manager is to divide your day's work into projects, each with specific tasks assigned, its primary function is to keep track of how much time you're spending on each task. In doing this, Task Manager is able to give you valuable feedback on exactly where your time is being spent and, more importantly, how good a job you're doing of sticking to your planned schedule.

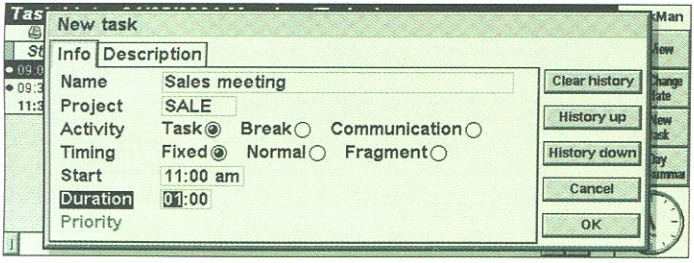
The first step in setting up the program for use is to enter all your current projects into Task Manager. This involves assigning a name, short code and optional descriptive text to specify each project, all of which can easily be edited at a later date.

The next step is then to allocate tasks to be completed in relation to each project. Tasks can be entered for any time in the future, even years in advance, and these are added in a similar fashion to To-do items and appointments you might enter into your Agenda, though the details of the entries themselves are rather different, as described below.

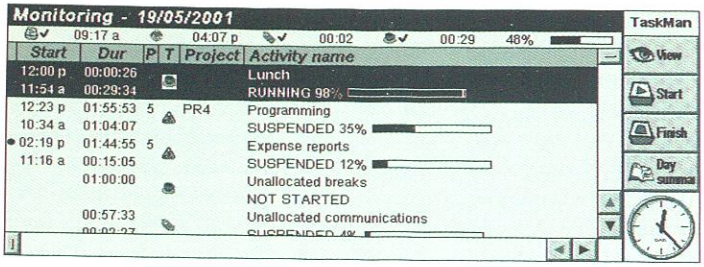
Every task is assigned one of three main categories: Task, Break or Communication. 'Task' is used for specific jobs; 'Break' is used to assign yourself time for lunch, coffee breaks, and so on; and 'Communication' is used for phone calls and discussions that crop up during the working day. Regardless of category, a 'Timing' setting is also used for each entry. This can be 'Fixed', which is used for entries that have a set start time and duration, such as meetings; 'Normal', where an entry is assigned a duration and a priority (from 1 to 5); and 'Fragment' for tasks that you don't have to perform at once, allowing you to perform part of a task at one point in the day and finish it some time later.

Whenever you start a working day, the procedure is to fire up Task Manager in its 'Monitoring' mode, where it will show all the various tasks you have allocated yourself. These will be sorted in order, with timed entries placed chronologically and all untimed events in order of their priority settings, to fill the remaining space.

On commencing one of your day's tasks, tap the Start button on the toolbar, and the Monitoring display will confirm that the task is now in progress, with a small timer display to indicate elapsed time, another to show remaining time (based upon the task duration you allocated earlier), and a real-



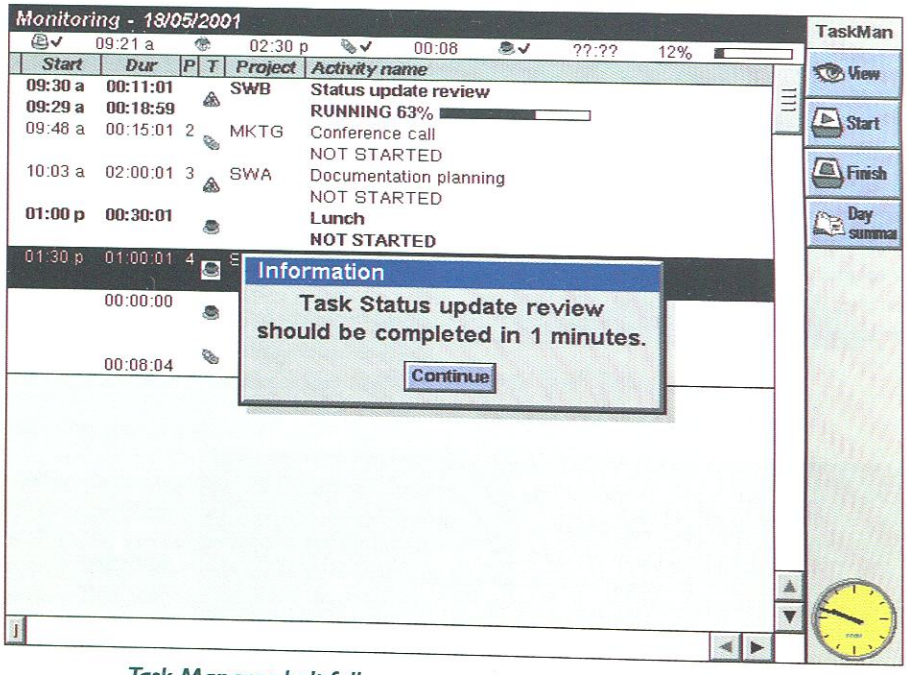
Entering a new task



Lunch in progress, showing other tasks either suspended or not yet started

time bar display to show the percentage completed. Any task can be interrupted merely by starting another, which then suspends the timer for the first task, transferring the logging procedure to the new one. Completed tasks are dropped to the bottom of the list, each showing a summary of time taken, start and finish times, etc.

The Monitoring screen (as shown on the adjacent screenshots) is where you'll spend the vast bulk of your time, as this is where you see the complete summary of what you're doing, what tasks are remaining for the day, and what's completed. This screen also shows the time when you'll be able to go home at the end of the day, based upon the number of hour's work remaining.



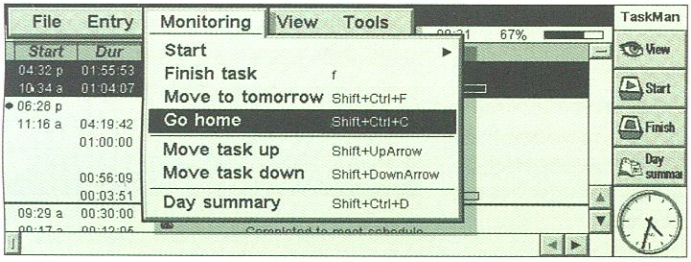
Task Manager helpfully warns you in advance of timed events

Although the display is quite comprehensive, there's a lot going on, so it takes a while to get the hang of what all the icons and numbers relate to. Icons are used to show such things as break time (represented by a coffee cup) and communication time (represented by a phone), but these are so tiny as to be barely recognisable. Also, if you have a lot of tasks assigned for the day, you may need to do quite a bit of scrolling around to keep track of everything on a palmtop screen, though this was almost certainly unavoidable. Task Manager runs happily on a Revo and Series 5/5mx, but is undoubtedly most satisfying to use on a Series 7 or netBook, where the extra screen area helps to keep scrolling to a minimum. Although all views can be zoomed to adjust the size of the display, these settings are not memorised when switching views, with Task Manager infuriatingly returning to the default zoom setting every time.

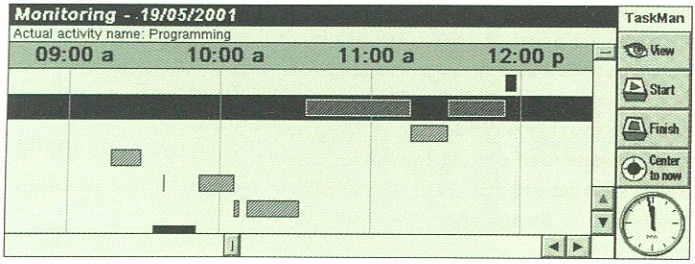
Performance in general can be sluggish, with Task Manager taking a few seconds to change between display modes and often a few *tens* of seconds to update and close the dialog after a new task is entered. It's important to note that Task Manager must be kept running continuously during the day in order to continue the monitoring process, though it can of course be sent to the background in order to use other applications.

Apart from monitoring the progress of each task, Task Manager will pop up reminders and optional alarms to tell you when timed events such as meetings are due. Once your day is finished, regardless of whether you've completed everything, it's necessary to select the 'Go home' menu option, which closes all tasks for that day.

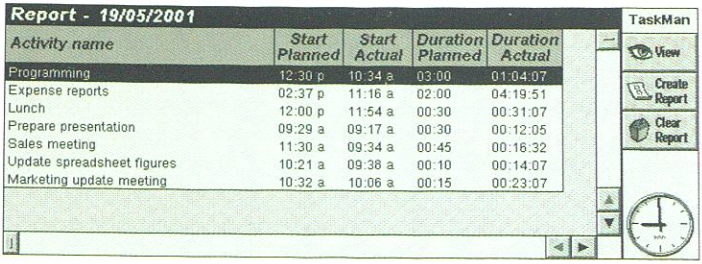
In addition to the standard list of monitored items, you can also show a 'Time snapshot' (see screenshot below), displaying a graphical representation of tasks along a daily timeline. This display can be scrolled and



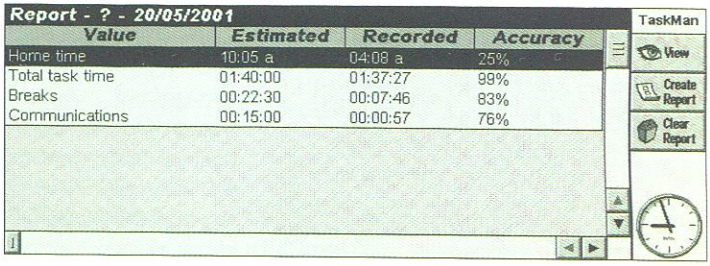
Telling Task Manager that it's time to go home, so you can finish monitoring for the day



The useful 'Time snapshot' mode, showing a graphical display of your day's work


Report - 19/05/2001
Activity name | Start Planned | Start Actual | Duration Planned | Duration Actual
Programming | 12:30 p | 10:34 a | 03:00 | 01:04:07
Expense reports | 02:37 p | 11:16 a | 02:00 | 04:19:51
Lunch | 12:00 p | 11:54 a | 00:30 | 00:31:07
Prepare presentation | 09:29 a | 09:17 a | 00:30 | 00:12:05
Sales meeting | 11:30 a | 09:34 a | 00:45 | 00:16:32
Update spreadsheet figures | 10:21 a | 09:38 a | 00:10 | 00:14:07
Marketing update meeting | 10:32 a | 10:06 a | 00:15 | 00:23:07
TaskMan
View
Create Report
Clear Report

One of Task Manager's comprehensive on-screen reports


Report - ? - 20/05/2001
Value | Estimated | Recorded | Accuracy
Home time | 10:05 a | 04:08 a | 25%
Total task time | 01:40:00 | 01:37:27 | 99%
Breaks | 00:22:30 | 00:07:46 | 83%
Communications | 00:15:00 | 00:00:57 | 76%
TaskMan
View
Create Report
Clear Report

Taking your medicine—a report showing your accuracy in meeting the day's task objectives

zoomed to show particular time segments, and tapping on any one of the time bars displays the associated task at the top of the screen.

Once a day's work has been completed, a number of on-screen reports are available. These can be used to show a daily summary, how much time has been spent on each task or each project, or how successful you've been in sticking to the day's planned task list. Sadly, none of these revealing reports can be printed out, as Task Manager has no printing facility whatsoever.

Apart from this lack of a printing facility and the minor performance gripes, Task Manager is a polished and powerful application that's well suited to its intended function. Many users will find any program of this type too regimented for continuous use over an extended period, but it's an excellent way to get an accurate picture of where your time is being spent, and even as a short-term exercise this in itself can help to improve your future efficiency. With no try-before-you-buy demo available there's no way to gauge how you'll get along with Task Manager before you pay for it, but for the sake of the $25 asking price, many business users will find it money well spent, even if they only use it for a 'time-and-motion study' over a couple of weeks.

Ken Dorr

Task Manager

From: Estuary Technologies (www.PocketManager.com)

Availability: Now

Price: $25

Quality ★★★½☆

Value ★★★★☆

Business Warrior

The modern EPOC user on the move typically has a lot of information at their fingertips. Agenda is full of things to do, appointments and meetings. Client names and addresses fill Contacts, along with hastily attached notes detailing what they do and when they've been contacted.

All of this can be overwhelming when trying to locate a vital piece of information, especially if you have separate groups of people and tasks that have to be added into the same Agenda or Contacts file.

Enter Business Warrior, whose goal is to coordinate all the separate bits of information in your computer to make it easier to enter, organise and view information over all your projects. It's designed primarily for salespeople to track customers, orders and prospects, but can be used effectively for managing the details of any project or client-based operation.

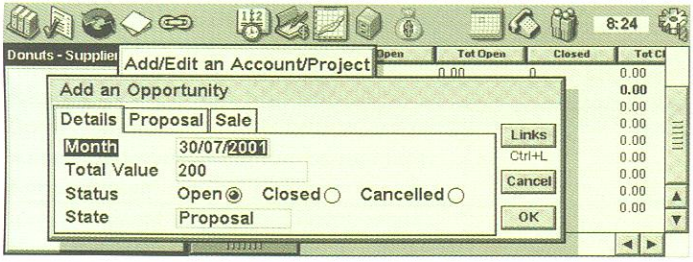
The first thing to note is that Business Warrior doesn't just help you get more out of your PDA, it can access almost any information on your Psion from its main screen. There should, in theory, be little need to use the System screen if you are using Business Warrior to the full. All options are readily available from a row of icons along the top of the screen. There's also a file browser that allows you to navigate your palmtop and launch files directly.

Business Warrior groups your information into Projects and then subdivides these into Accounts. Once you've decided on a few accounts, it's time to start linking existing data to them. The first thing you'll want to do is associate specific contacts to separate accounts. These could be people who you want to sell a product to, or people who can supply you with stock.

Adding a contact is simple, with an 'Add' icon on the top toolbar and 'Add a Contact' on its pop-up menu. An uncluttered dialog presents itself, allowing you to search for a contact to select. If they aren't already in your Contacts file, you can add them with a tap of the stylus.

When you now add items to your Agenda, rather than having to make a note of who or what the item refers to, Business Warrior will remember which of its accounts it's linked to. And when you select an account, you'll be shown only the Agenda entries linked to that account (assuming that you've activated the appropriate filter).

There are three entry types that you can link to accounts in order to organise your business day: Visits, To dos and Opportunities.



Adding a Sales Opportunity

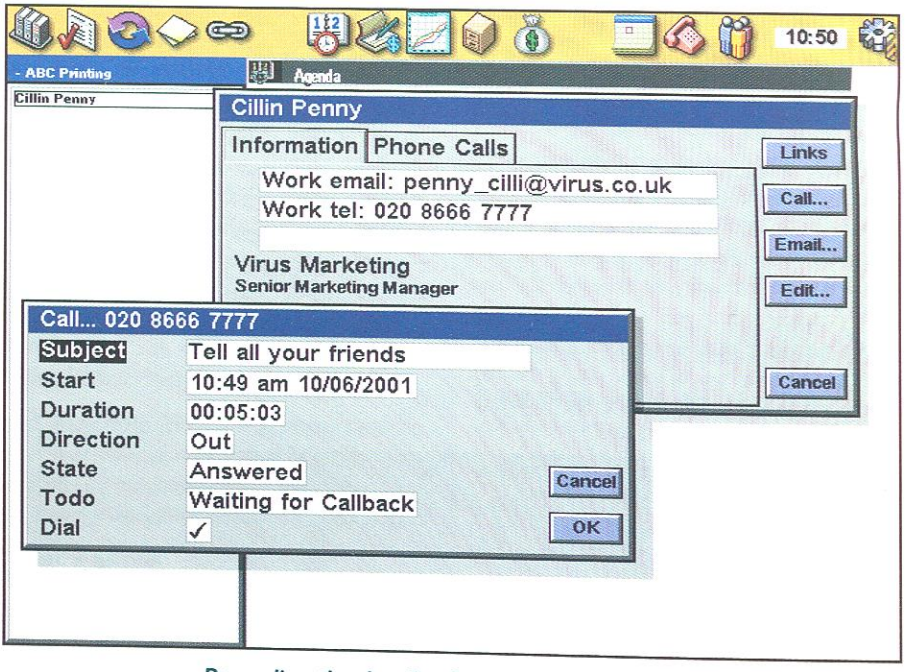
Visits are normally used when you have an appointment or a meeting. These are added into the main body of your Agenda, in the normal way. As with any other Agenda entry, you can specify an alarm or embed files. In the same way, you can also add entries to any To do list.

An Opportunity is a special type of entry that helps you follow up sales leads that you receive. Business Warrior provides a tabular report showing you how successful your sales have been over the past month. This works well if you have targets to meet and need to have a quick resumé of your position. It also allows you to see which sales you have completed, which you have just entered and which you still need to work on.

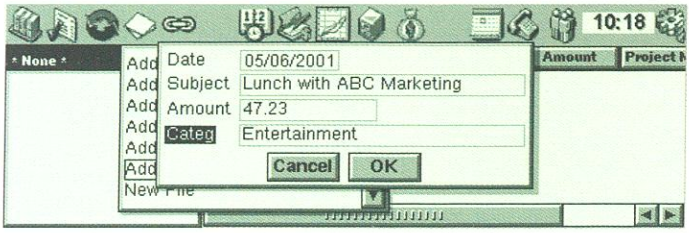
As well as monitoring sales figures, you can keep track of your history with each contact, enabling you to see who you've been talking to and, more importantly, who you haven't.

In a similar vein to recording calls made to your contacts, you can also keep track of any Business expenses you incur, again tying it into your contacts. The overview lets you sort on all the categories, such as by project or contact.

Despite Business Warrior's power, one of its biggest benefits is the fact that it helps to keep everything simple and can be operated by only a few stylus taps. Its flexibility means that with a little thought it can be used to help most Psion users, not just those in a sales rôle.



Recording the details of a Phone Conversation



Adding an expense item on a Revo

The ability to put contacts into distinct groups is something that many desktop applications are able to do—by default you're stuck with a single Contacts database under EPOC. Using Business Warrior, you can group your contacts into business, family and friends, and then subdivide these further as necessary.

Using Business Warrior as your Agenda viewer will be especially useful to anyone more used to applications like Microsoft Outlook on the desktop. The overview of daily appointments is one of the main benefits, and To do lists become a lot easier to manage in Business Warrior than in the native Agenda application.

For such a powerful application, you really need good documentation. Unfortunately, Business Warrior's help file is miniscule. Out of four entries, only one pertains to the operation of the program, taking up only a dozen lines of text. This is offset by a detailed Word tutorial (downloadable from the Corisoft web site in EPOC or Windows format) but it would have been better to see this content in the help file, as with most other EPOC applications.

Business Warrior runs in colour on the Series 7 and netBook, though to achieve this it's necessary to download two colour MBM files separately and copy them manually into the appropriate System folder, which is tedious and confusing for the novice user. Without a 'readme.txt' file in the downloaded zip file, installation requires more than a little knowledge of the EPOC filing system. Building the colour elements into the main SIS file would have been far preferable.

In addition, the lack of a zoom function in Business Warrior sometimes means that the screen can be difficult to read.

A lot of time has been taken to make Business Warrior as simple as possible to use. The interface is uncluttered and contains no surprises, and while there is a lot going on, it's quite easy to understand, once you learn what all the icons at the top of the screen do. This application can be a powerful addition for anyone who needs more flexibility than is provided by the built-in Agenda and Contacts applications.

Ewan Spence

Business Warrior

From: Corisoft and Pocket IQ (corisoft.free.fr and www.pocketiq.com)

Availability: Now

Price: £18, shareware

Quality ★★★½☆

Value ★★★½☆

V-Rally

Recently ported from the Palm OS game of the same name, V-Rally is the latest EPOC release from TomTom (a.k.a. PalmTop Software). The fact that it started life on square-screened organisers is evident as soon as the game is launched on a Psion palmtop, as all the action takes place within the central portion of the screen, with the left and right extremities used for little more than decorative backdrops and 'steering' controls, which we'll come to later.

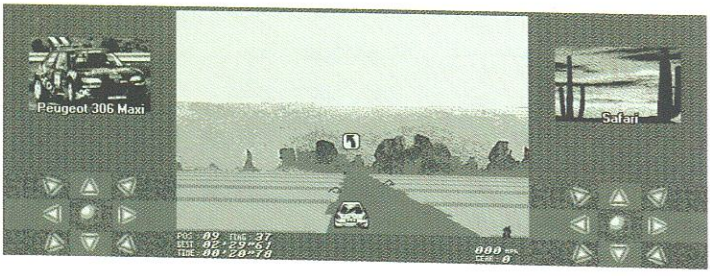
As the title implies, V-Rally is an animated car rally racing game. The opening screens give you the option of four rally cars, each with a different combination of acceleration, maximum speed, grip and braking performance. A general 'Options' screen gives the opportunity to switch sound effects and helpful road signs on or off, and set the difficulty level to either Rookie, Pro or Ace. As usual with TomTom's products, several languages are supported: in this case English, German, French, Spanish, Italian and Japanese. You can also set the on-screen speed display to either mph or kph.

For gameplay you're presented with three options: Practice (where you can try out a circuit to hone your skills), Arcade (where you pit yourself against 10 opponents in 10 different stages), and Championship, where you must accumulate sufficient points to attain World Champion status.

The Palm version of V-Rally suffered from being far too easy—it was possible to complete and win the entire 'Ace' Championship mode after only a couple of hours' play. The EPOC version has no such handicap, and it took at least that amount of time just to get beyond the first four races in Arcade mode. To help keep the interest and anticipation level up further, all three play modes require you to complete earlier rounds before progressing to others, so initially you're only allowed onto the first three tracks in Arcade or Championship mode, or the first five in Practice mode.

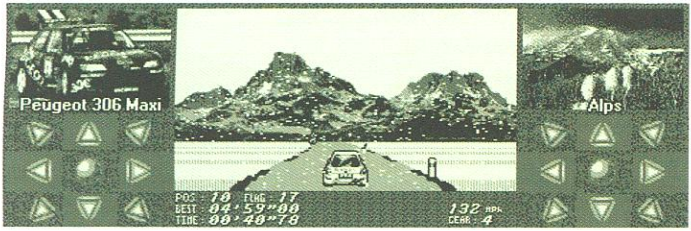
The 20 tracks are located in 10 countries around the world, ranging from the Swiss Alps to African Safari. Although the tracks themselves vary little in real terms, the backdrops offer a good diversion and you'll even be presented with occasional rain and snow falling where appropriate, though these don't appear to affect gameplay.

Although acceleration, braking and steering can be accomplished with the four arrow keys, the matrix of eight navigation arrows on either side of the screen can be used instead, with simple continuous sliding of the pointer used to keep the car 'on track'. In practice I found stylus control preferable, being more responsive, saving wear and



On Safari location with the Series 5mx

New tracks don't become available until you've successfully completed previous ones



It's snowing in the Swiss Alps!

tear on the keyboard, and helping to avoid finger cramp.

The animation of the game is beautifully smooth throughout, and the sound effects simulate co-driver input with warnings such as "Easy left", "Hard right", and so on. Depending upon what you hit, deviating from the track either causes your car to slow down, losing valuable time, or results in a dramatic somersault, losing even more. If you clip the back end or side of a car you're trying to pass, you'll suffer a similar penalty.

During each race you'll start in 10th (last) position, and have to work your way up through the field in order to win. You'll only get through to the second and third stage of each race by making sufficiently good time in the previous stage, and this requires a good deal of practice. Occasional on-track obstacles make things even harder.

An on-screen display shows details of your current position, time speed and gear selection (though the latter is always automatic), but sadly these numbers appear so small that they're hard to read, particularly when your attention is diverted to the race in hand. Another limitation stems from the passive monochrome screens used on most EPOC models, which don't cope well with the fast animation of V-Rally and cause the background scenes to 'smear' somewhat.

Despite the inherent screen limitations and the fact that all the action takes part in a tiny central portion of the screen (the car doesn't move around the screen—the track just scrolls by), V-Rally is quite absorbing, and recommended for Psion-owning race fans.

Paul Nelson

V-Rally

From: TomTom (www.tomtom.com)

Availability: Now (various languages)

Price: $30 (electronic download)

Quality	★★★★☆
Value	★★★☆☆

LomeWood DeskBox

If you want the ultimate executive desk accessory for your Series 5/5mx and are feeling extravagant, then look no further than the LomeWood DeskBox. Like any other 'desk stand' product its function barely goes beyond helping to keep your Psion visible above the mountain of papers on your desk, or perhaps helping to keep the dust off.

Ignoring the rather dubious utility value, the Deskbox is a handsome piece of carpentry. Available in a variety of exotic solid hardwood finishes, it looks a million dollars. The review sample had a polished teak centre section with ebony end panels. These are glued into the bottom, with the perfectly fitting lid attached at the rear with hidden brass hinges and a powerful flush-fitting magnetic catch at the front that snaps the case tightly closed. Suitable slots and cutouts are provided to allow infrared operation and attachment of an AC adaptor, and a neat slot in the side of the lid is used to house the stylus. Four small plastic feet are provided to prevent the DeskBox from scatching your expensive mahogany desk.

The case is clearly designed for Psion use *in situ*, though the rather high sides of the case can hamper touch typing a little, particularly if you have large hands.

It's hard to fault the build quality of the DeskBox, but with prices ranging from £155-£190 depending upon the finish chosen, the product is undoubtedly expensive. Still, it's a thing of beauty that's well constructed, well finished, and is even supplied in a drawstring velveteen bag. Quality like this doesn't come cheap.

Robert Smail

LomeWood DeskBox

From: LomeWood (www.lomewood.com)

Availability: Now (via German web site)

Price: £155-190 approx. (255-306 Euros)

Quality ★★★★½

Value ★★½☆☆

The 9210 cometh...

Steve Litchfield takes an advance look at the exciting new Nokia 9210 communicator

Richer in functionality than any other product we've ever covered within the pages of Palmtop magazine, the new Nokia 9210 dictates a slightly different review style. It's utterly impossible to get to grips with every facet of this Symbian communicator in a few snatched moments a month or so ahead of the expected official release. Instead, this is unashamedly a preview, giving my initial observations, impressions and opinions. As soon as a production unit is available, rest assured that we'll featuring a long-term test, showing how it stands up to use in daily life.

First impressions

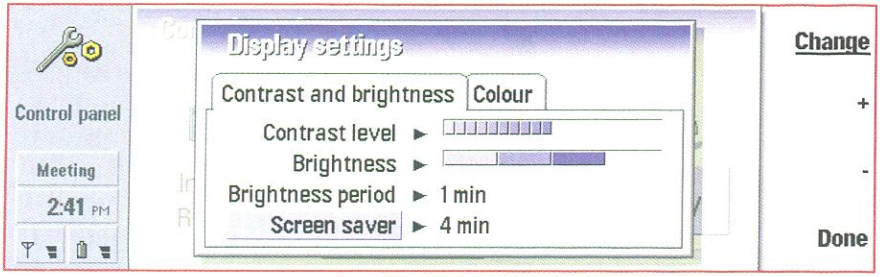
My first impression of the Nokia 9210 was how small it is. Having expected something akin to a Series 5mx with a GSM phone grafted on, the 9210 is very slender, at only 56mm wide. It's slightly deeper than the 5mx, at 27mm, but the difference is barely noticeable. Of course, these dimensions (and weight, 245g) are unthinkable for a modern mobile phone, but then this compares to a phone in the same way that an F-16 compares to a Cessna.

The external styling (and much of the device concept) is uniquely Nokia, with identical form factor to their old (GeOS powered) 9110. A short aerial unfolds from the top of the case, but in strong signal areas it can be left sheathed (it was only after web browsing successfully for a while that I even realised I'd forgotten to flip out the aerial). The small GSM phone display and button layout are again all typical to the Nokia family, with no surprises other than the earpiece and microphone holes being on the 'wrong' side of the unit.

Opening it up

Opening up the 9210 holds two major surprises. The first thing you'll notice is the utterly gorgeous screen—it may be smaller than that on the Series 5mx at 640 by 200 pixels, but it has wonderful brightness, contrast and (of course) colour. Nokia have used TFT technology in the screen (with 4096 separate colours available) and its performance is further improved by the absence of a touch-screen layer. To a generation of owners brought up on the stylus-driven Series 5 and Revo ranges, not having a touch-sensitive screen might seem abhorrent, but the 9210's combination of function than its Psion competitors and there isn't a lot of space to work with inside the case, so there were undoubtedly technical reasons why a more sophisticated keyboard design wasn't used.

The arrow keys are cleverly moulded into a single control, especially useful in the Web browser for moving a 'virtual mouse' around the screen. ER5's 'Fn' key has now been renamed 'Chr' and allied more to specific character-related functions. Given Nokia's Scandinavian background and the fact that the 9210's EPOC Release 6 (ER6) operating system uses Unicode throughout, you

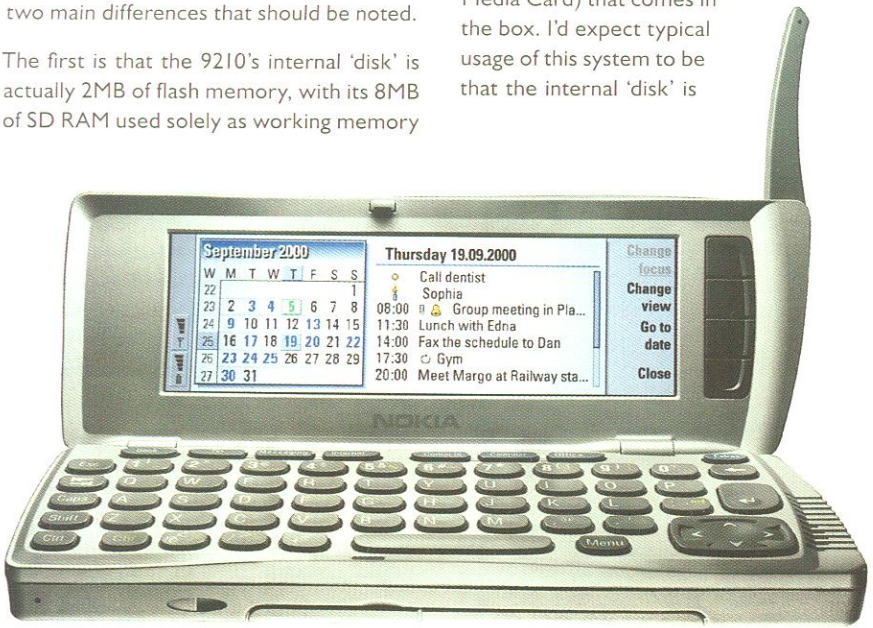


Setting up the way the 9210 screen appears and behaves

Memory and disks

Despite the fact that, in terms of software, the 9210 is a direct descendant of ER5, as used in the Series 5mx, etc., the way memory is arranged is very different. Because of the greater robustness needed from a communicator, in which things such as a run-down battery or forgetfulness on the part of a new user shouldn't compromise the stored documents and data, there are two main differences that should be noted.

The first is that the 9210's internal 'disk' is actually 2MB of flash memory, with its 8MB of SD RAM used solely as working memory for running applications. Using flash for often-changing documents and configuration files seems a little dangerous to me, given the high but limited number of write-cycles possible, but remember that Nokia's 9110 used a similar technique and there are still plenty of those around and working. With such a small internal disk, the expansion card becomes absolutely vital, in this case a 16MB MMC (Multi-Media Card) that comes in the box. I'd expect typical usage of this system to be that the internal 'disk' is



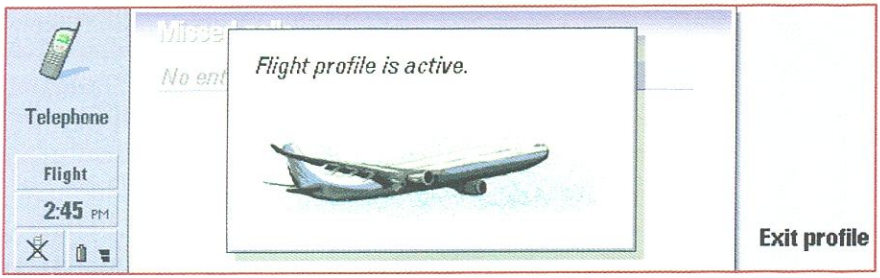
used for new system files and libraries (a natural occurrence as third party software gets loaded), configuration and temporary files, with the MMC disk used for all main storage of documents, projects, third party applications, images, etc. Power users will of course need a much larger MMC (64MB cards being the largest size available as we go to press). Bear in mind, by the way, that these numbers may well change for the final release units.

Secondly, every ER6 application now automatically saves its document and data files whenever the unit is closed or when another application is called up. Although a nuisance for those of us who relish making changes to important documents relying on using ER5's 'Revert to saved' to get us out of trouble, this new approach will certainly make sense for less computer-literate newcomers.

With the two features above, it's possible to close the 9210 at any stage, swap over the battery pack (a flush-fitting, square module on the communicator's bottom) and watch the unit perform a hard reset in absolute confidence that you won't have lost anything. Interestingly, the hardware design forces removal of the battery whenever the communicator's SIM card is swapped. The MMC is hot-swappable, with EPOC detecting the opening of the MMC bay cover, registering any change in disk and adjusting any on-screen displays accordingly (such as display of any 'Extras' applications found).

RISC and GSM

Inside the 9210 is a 32-bit ARM9-based RISC CPU running at 52MHz and in use this seemed ample, with applications taking a few seconds to open from scratch and (as you'd expect with EPOC) instantly available



With the 'Flight' profile activated, telephony functions are most definitely OFF

thereafter by switching back using buttons or the 'Open files' task list. Although the front panel phone display isn't part of EPOC's domain, it certainly seems able to pass through important messages, such as alarm text when an alarm sounds with the unit closed, in which case the alarm can be acknowledged using the standard Nokia panel buttons.

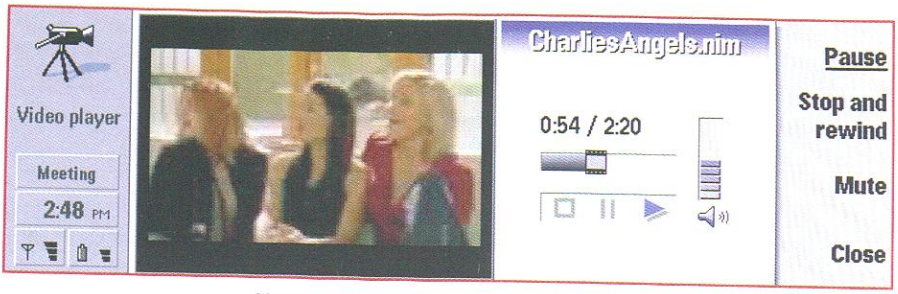
The single biggest change to EPOC since ER5 has been all the telephony support. The world of mobile communications seems to be moving more slowly than many companies had hoped, with the result that Nokia have (perhaps sensibly) released the 9210 as a humble GSM device, rather than waiting still further for mainstream GPRS later in 2001 or even 2002. If your telecommunications operator supports it (only Orange at the moment in the UK), HSCSD is also possible with the 9210, which under ideal conditions ups the maximum data rate by a factor of around four. The 9210 is also only dual-band (900/1800) at the moment, although I'm sure versions will appear for other world markets.

Nokia-specific

As already intimated, I found the Nokia 9210 to be an incredibly 'rich' product. Quite apart from the use of ER6 and the 'Crystal' reference design (which itself warranted a massive 14 page preview feature in Palmtop issue 32), there are quite a number of applications and tweaks that are specific to Nokia. For example, there's a brand new Telephone application, integrating neatly into Contacts to such an extent that when making a call with the 9210 open, a thumbnail image of the other person is displayed (if present in Contacts in the first place, of course).

Standard Nokia 'profiles' have been implemented ('General', 'Silent', 'Meeting', 'Outdoor', 'Pager' and 'Flight', by default), each of which can be selected either using the 9210's front panel or with a special menu card present in every application. For each profile (you can define your own, by the way), every possible communicator configuration can be controlled, such as setting system and alarm sounds to a higher level when outdoors, or perhaps making sure the telephone component is kept safely powered off during an airline flight.

In addition to a number of branded GSM utilities, Nokia have bundled a number of games, all of which make good use of the TFT colour screen. Virtual Snowboarding, Bounce, Snake EX and a bubble Tetris

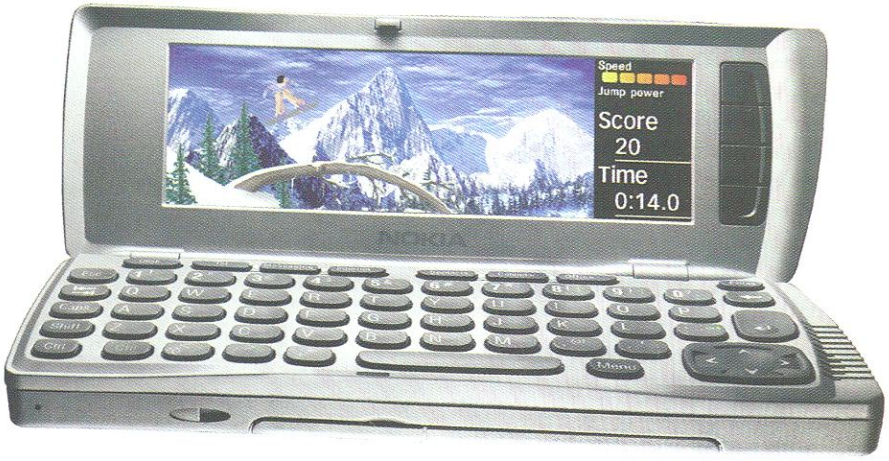


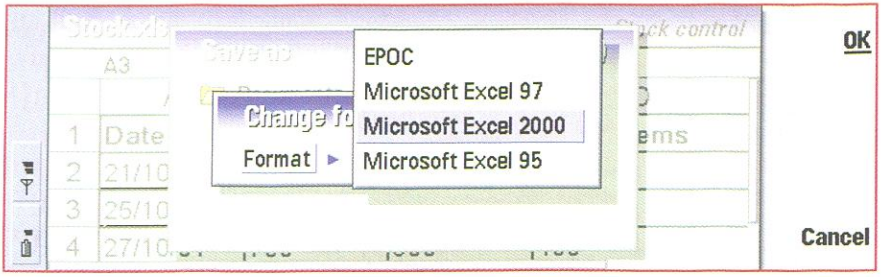
Viewing a Charlie's Angels video clip

puzzle were present on the review unit, but Mobile Soccer and Mobile Golf are also promised for free download once the 9210 ships.

Also present are a photo album, with support for receipt of images by infrared from a digital camera, plus a video player. As you might expect, the heavy memory requirements of digital video mean that the picture quality of the latter leaves something to be desired, with a tiny playback window of just 240 by 144 pixels. The upside of the tiny picture is that video files tend to be much smaller than on the desktop. A contact on the Internet even claimed to have compressed an entire 90 minute movie onto a single 64MB MMC! Nokia provide a Multimedia Convertor on the 9210's CD, which accepts common formats such as Quicktime, AVI, MPG, MP3, etc., converting them all for playback in the Nokia's video player and voice recorder.

Visible to the right of the keyboard is the semicircular speaker grille, which produces surprisingly good sound, helping to accompany a movie, playing back a voice recording, sounding an alarm (*very* loudly) or making speakerphone operation possible. I tried





Saving a spreadsheet in Excel 2000 format, for transmission by email

making a voice call with the device open and found that it worked well. Standard Nokia headsets are also compatible with the 9210, as are various other Nokia accessories.

The Vision

Nokia's (and Symbian's) vision for the 9210 and the Crystal design is that rhetoric about a communicator replacing a laptop and mobile phone will finally be realised. And they're not kidding. With ER6's help, the 9210 can for example receive a call from your Managing Director, in which you're asked to amend some figures in an Excel spreadsheet the MD has been working on. You say that you're out of the office and could they email the file through to you. Two minutes later, you've opened up the 9210 and you're online and picking up the file as an email attachment, opening it directly in Sheet. It becomes apparent that you need some information from the *FT.com* web site—two button presses later, you're on the site and drilling down to get the data you need. 10 minutes and one voice call interruption (which you take on the speakerphone, without stopping your work in Sheet) later and you've made the required changes, saving the file in Excel 2000 format and attaching it to an email to your director, which is duly despatched. Now that's out of the way, you relax with a game or start up Street Planner to work out the best way to get to your next client.

To be able to do all of this easily on a single device weighing only 244g is nothing short of astounding. If you're fed up with lugging around a laptop, cables, cellphone and PDA, the Nokia 9210 truly has the potential to revolutionize your working lifestyle.

ER6 and omissions

The base ER6 operating system and applications work almost exactly as described in issue 32's preview feature, providing most of ER5's functionality and then some of its own, while presenting a slightly simpler interface to the world, especially when use centres around the four function buttons, which are intelligently set up at each turn to present the commands you're likely to need.

There have been a few omissions though, presumably dictated by Nokia, although the extensibility of EPOC means that missing applications can easily be installed at a later date, if Nokia and Symbian should decide to make them available on the Web.

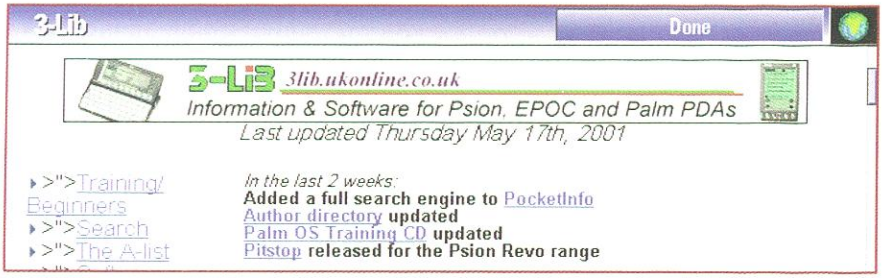
Although not directly important to the average user, the biggest casualty is prob-

ably OPL, with neither the Program editor nor the interpreter that lets translated applications run under ER6. It's easy to sympathise that OPL might not have been a priority to Nokia and their perceived target market, but it's something that could severely hamper the amount of third party software produced for the 9210 and future compatibles. Let's hope that OPL appears as a free download in the very near future.

There's no sign of Data, another great shame considering the number of useful databases already in EPOC Data format, although existing files would presumably have had to be converted to use ER6's Unicode character system. Also missing is Jotter, although ER6's Desktop Notes go some way to providing similar functionality. Without a touch-screen or Data compatibility, Sketch would of course have been totally redundant, so there's a media server module built into ER6 instead, offering up standard images (in JPG, MBM, BMP formats, etc.) for embedding into Word or Contacts.

On the Web

The 'WWW browser application' (as Nokia rather cumbersomely refer to it) appears to be largely just ER5's Web, but with support for secure connections. A report on exactly what's supported will have to wait for our long term test, but I did look up my own 3-Lib site and then moved on to do some simple online shopping on a Psion dealer site, without problem. One especially nice feature of WWW is a 'virtual mouse' mode, in which the arrow key controller acts as a joystick to nudge a mouse pointer around the screen, making selection of specific hyperlinks much easier. The 9210's 8MB of working memory starts to look a bit on the thin side when starting up WWW, with a rather unfortunate forced shutdown of all other open applications and not enough memory to run Java applets embedded within web pages.



A spot of web surfing—no wires and only one box!

Nice touches

In use, the Nokia 9210's implementation of ER6 Crystal has a number of rather neat touches. The (optional) left-hand status pane is constantly updated with icons and gauges for signal and battery strength, desktop link status, charging status, and so on. The right-hand toolbar can usefully be hidden to maximise the main display size, with a press on any of the function buttons popping the toolbar back for a few seconds. In addition to working as usual, the Shift key has a 'sticky' mode—press it once and release and then press another key, and the latter will be Shifted, potentially useful when working one-handed.

Windows TrueType Fonts are used throughout Crystal, with full WYSIWYG at every font size and zoom level, although I wasn't able to test how well they printed. Extra TTFs can be loaded into \System\ Fonts if needed, where they'll be picked up by each application.

Symbian Connect

The 9210 is to ship with Symbian Connect 6, a clear evolution of the current PsiWin system. Time will tell if it's any more robust than PsiWin, but there are a number of new touches, such as the Task Scheduler and an 'Offline' mode, in which document conversions and synchronizations can be queued up, waiting for the next time the Nokia 9210 is plugged in. Most synchronization is built around Microsoft Outlook (all versions), but there is also basic support for Lotus Organizer. A special administration utility allows you to set up synchronizations and installations in an XML file and then use this to configure other 9210s, which should be useful in corporate environments. There's no USB support, by the way, so all communication with the desktop has to be via serial cable or infrared.

Natural upgrade

In the absence of any imminent competition from Psion or other Symbian licensees, the Nokia 9210 forms a natural 21st century upgrade for many Psion palmtop owners, for whom the prospect of a feature rich one-box solution will be very enticing indeed.

Thanks to Symbian, the Nokia Academy, My-Communicator.com and various developers, for their help in researching this preview.

The WEB in the palm of your hand

by Steve Litchfield

Palmtop's unofficial guide to Psion-friendly web resources

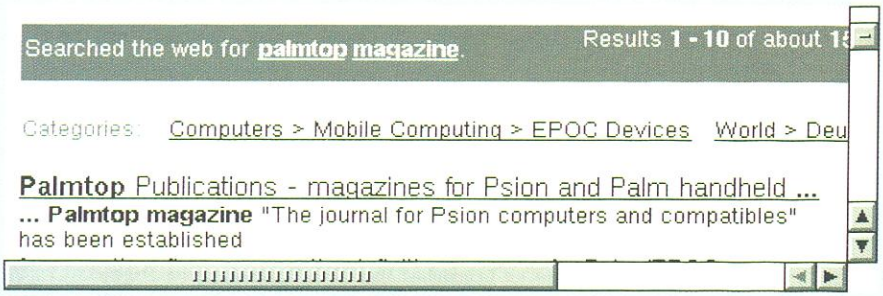
The problem with the modern Web

It goes without saying for any short guide to web resources (of any kind) that it's not definitive—the World Wide Web is just too huge. Half the fun of 'surfing' the Internet is surely in the browsing process, never knowing quite where your hyperlinks will take you. At the same time, it's very easy to get sidetracked into following links which distract you from what you logged on to find out about.

Add a Psion palmtop into the equation as your Internet-linked computer and web browsing suddenly gets a whole lot more difficult, with modern web sites often demanding large colour screens, Macromedia Flash compatibility, Cascading Style Sheets and a fast enough processor to cope with dozens of kilobytes of bloated HTML and often unnecessary Javascript. Most of which are near impossible to satisfy on a Psion handheld.

Given the fact that web browsing on a palmtop is something many people would like to do if practical, various solutions are being tried:

- Use WAP, which relies on special gateways and severely stripped down versions of original web sites (see issues 29 and 31 for features on WAP). The main disadvantage is that only a miniscule fraction of the Internet's content is available via WAP, so you'll almost certainly be missing out on content.
- Use Offline Web (reviewed in issue 29, from *www.tomtom.com*), the 'AvantGo' of the EPOC world. This allows you to set up links ('subscriptions') to specific URLs, with your PC's fast Internet connection regularly downloading the pages and optimising the content for copying over onto your Psion, to be read 'offline'. The disadvantage, of course, is that you have to know where you want


Searched the web for palmtop magazine.
Results 1 - 10 of about 1
Categories: Computers > Mobile Computing > EPOC Devices World > Deu
Palmtop Publications - magazines for Psion and Palm handheld ...
... Palmtop magazine "The journal for Psion computers and compatibles" has been established

to browse ahead of time and you can't then deviate or follow off-site links.

- Use a proxy-based solution. At the time of going to press, such a system doesn't exist for EPOC, but it's a clever enough idea to warrant a mention. Especially as it works so well in the Palm OS world, where an application called Blazer is installed on the handheld and all requests for web pages are sent via a dedicated proxy server farm. This grabs all content (including images), strips and compresses it and then sends it down the line to the handheld.

  There's no technical reason why a similar system couldn't be set up for EPOC—perhaps this article will spur a company to take up the challenge?

- Throw horsepower at the problem. By using a 56k modem, a Psion netBook and the Opera web browser, it's possible to view much of the Web in more or less the same manner as on a desktop.

Back in the real world, most people are likely to have nothing more than a Revo Plus and a GSM mobile phone, with a data rate of around 9.6kbps, at which specification surfing the Web can be a very frustrating experience.

There's another option, of course. By sticking to web sites which are efficiently written or specifically optimised for mobile access, it's possible to avoid the effects of technology over-use and HTML bloat altogether. The trick is to know where to go, and that's where this feature aims to help. We proudly present the Palmtop guide to web friendly resources...

The Guide

Most of the sites mentioned here are perfectly usable in Psion's built-in Web browser, but you'll almost certainly find that the excellent shareware Opera browser does a better and faster job. See issue 30 for our most recent review of Opera.

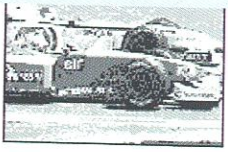
As you check out these sites and generally browse around, don't forget to bookmark places you want to get back to in a hurry. When on a potentially expensive wireless link, taking 30 seconds to enter a long URL is best avoided!

Google

The biggest and fastest search engine on the Internet is also distinguished by a beautifully minimalist interface that's very useable even on a slow connection. The

Portillo kicks off Tory leadership battle

Michael Portillo becomes the first person to declare his candidacy in the fight to follow William Hague as leader of the UK Conservative Party.



Benetton's Giancarlo Fisichella retired almost immediately after colliding with team-mate Jenson Button.

Seconds later, Jaguar's Eddie Irvine and Sauber's Nick Heidfeld also crashed out after skidding into each other

search results are top notch too, ranked according to popularity as well as best fit to your keywords.

www.google.com

BBC News

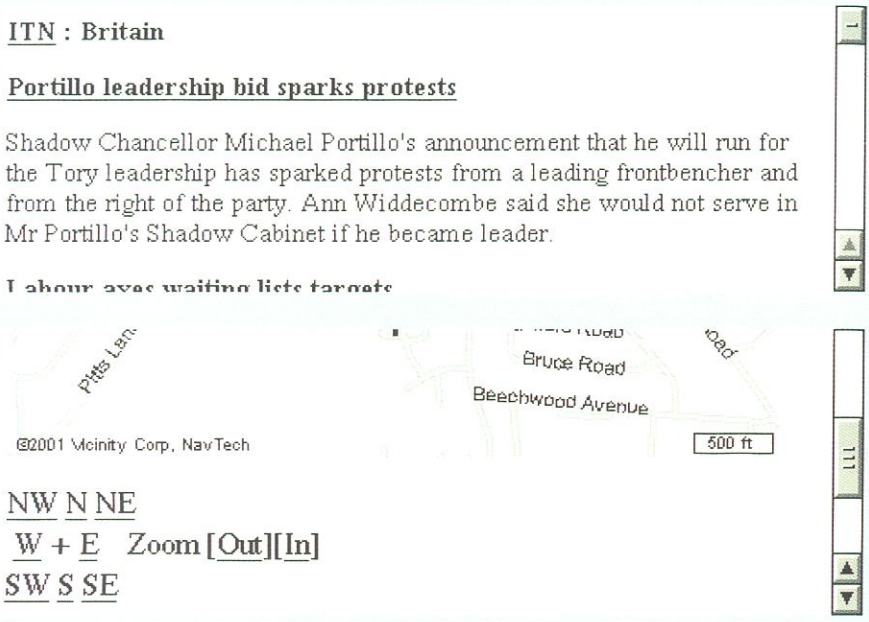
Very definitely not just a television company, the BBC has made huge efforts to make its web site known the world over as a source of news and content. Most importantly of all, many stories and items are available in both high and low bandwidth forms, the latter perfectly suited to a Psion palmtop. Site sections include World and UK news, Business, Politics, Science and Technology, Health and Entertainment, with each section seeing up to a dozen new stories each day. Despite what you might think from the URL below, there *are* pictures involved, where appropriate, but they're always kept small and quick to download.

news.bbc.co.uk/text_only.stm

BBC Sport Online

Rather curiously, and despite what you might think from the URL, this seems to be run as a separate site, but the same low bandwidth option is available. Site sections include Results/Fixtures, Football, Cricket, Tennis, Golf and Motor Sports. Again, highly recommended as the definitive online source of sports news, with a welcome UK bias.

news.bbc.co.uk/sport/low/english/default.stm


ITN : Britain
Portillo leadership bid sparks protests
Shadow Chancellor Michael Portillo's announcement that he will run for the Tory leadership has sparked protests from a leading frontbencher and from the right of the party. Ann Widdecombe said she would not serve in Mr Portillo's Shadow Cabinet if he became leader.
Labour axes waiting lists targets
Phils Lane
Bruce Road
Beechwood Avenue
©2001 Vicinity Corp, NavTech
500 ft
NW N NE
W + E Zoom [Out][In]
SW S SE

ITN

Along similar lines to the BBC, but less categorised and less comprehensive, is this ITN site. It scores for ultra-fast access to news and sport though, by virtue of being stripped right down to plain text throughout.

avantgo.itn.co.uk

Pocket Mapblast

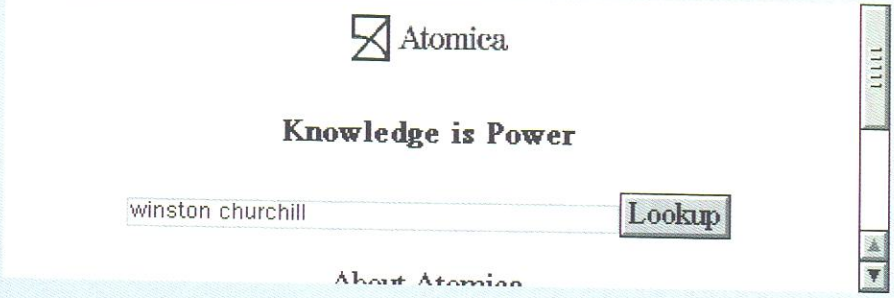
You'll recall those amazing sequences in movies where a camera viewpoint zooms in from a shot of Planet Earth right down to street level in a specific town? Pocket MapBlast is a bit like that, offering (rather incredibly) online street maps of virtually anywhere in the world, at any screen resolution you want (down to 150 by 150 pixels) and by address, postcode or latitude/longitude. You can choose between colour, greyscale and black and white versions, and a textual compass 'rose' allows both nudging the current map in any direction and also zooming in or out as needed.

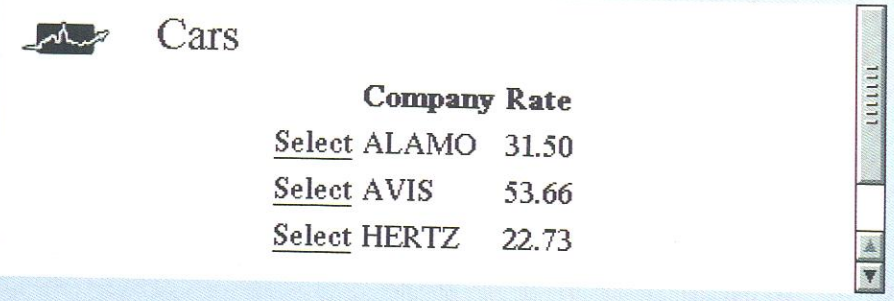
www.mapblast.com/pblast/start.mb

Atomica

It's often said that all human knowledge is (or will soon be) held online, on the Internet. Sites like Atomica are a step in that direction, with an extremely minimalist (and fast to download) interface giving access to an up-to-date online dictionary, encyclopaedia, history, geography and biography reference, and translation service.

208.178.168.43/content/Atomica.pqa/index.html





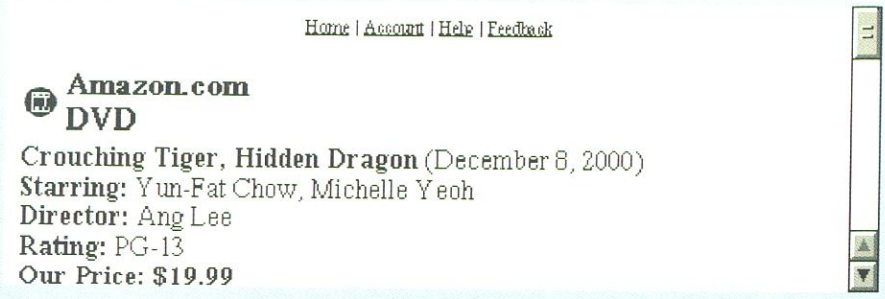
lastminute.com

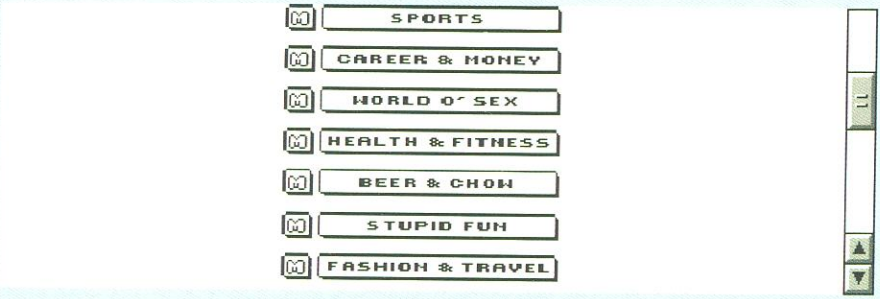
Possibly the most famous of all UK travel sites, lastminute.com is divided into Flights, Hotels and Holidays. The information's all there online, from checking flight times to spotting a last minute bargain holiday, although you'll need to pick up the phone to actually make a booking. This is their 'PDA' edition of the site, running very fast even on a GSM link.

pda.lastminute.com/Palm/GB-travel/index.html

Travelocity

Another top travel setup, with international scope and just as fast, with facilities to book flights, hotels and cars. Air travellers can check flight schedules and status, set up





itineraries and look up obscure airport codes. Special money-saving features include 'Fare Watcher' and 'Dream Fares'. Yet again, as evidenced by the rather strange URL, this is their special mobile edition of the site.

dps1.travelocity.com/hhtcy.ctl?Service=OMNIHHDML

Amazon

Famous for online ordering of books, CDs, DVDs and videos, Amazon offer their full range of enquiry and purchase via this 'PocketPC' mobile version of the site. Whether you want to actually buy anything or not, it's a good way of checking whether a specific title is still available for purchase.

www.amazon.com/pocketpc

MAXIM Online

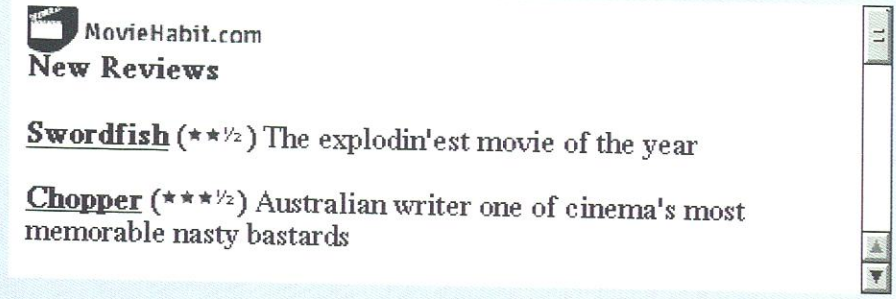
Yes, it's a men's magazine, it's online and there's plenty on sports, beer, money and sex. But before female readers stop here, there are also sections for Health & Fitness and Fashion & Travel, with everything written in an entertaining style. This is the AvantGo-optimised edition, so it won't take more than a few seconds per page.

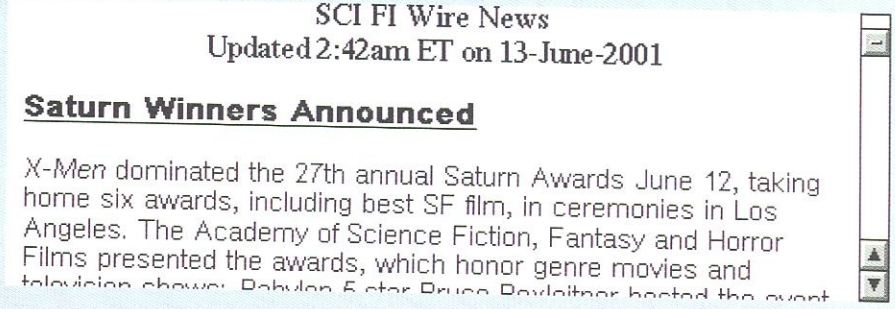
www.maximonline.com/avantgo

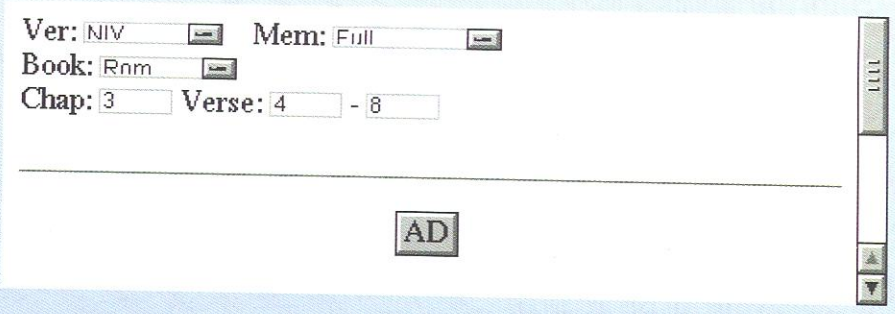
Movie Habit

With hardly an image in sight, this is a good (if USA-biased) guide to the latest block-busters in the cinema and video stores.

www.moviehabit.com/handheld


MovieHabit.com
New Reviews
Swordfish (★★½) The explodin'est movie of the year
Chopper (★★★½) Australian writer one of cinema's most memorable nasty bastards


SCI FI Wire News
Updated 2:42am ET on 13-June-2001
Saturn Winners Announced
X-Men dominated the 27th annual Saturn Awards June 12, taking home six awards, including best SF film, in ceremonies in Los Angeles. The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films presented the awards, which honor genre movies and



SCI FI

It's a fair bet that many of you are also fans of science fiction, with SCI FI's news digest offering something for anyone. From block-buster movies to low-budget TV series', all the science fiction news and gossip is here, updated regularly for this handheld edition. Find out what's in production, what's been cancelled and who's about to star in what.

www.scifi.com/handheld

Bible Buddy

As with encyclopaedias and maps, the entire text of the Bible is not something to throw at your Psion's memory lightly, clocking in at 2.5MB even when highly compressed. Bible Buddy's simple interface offers the entire text of seven popular Bible translations—just pick the book needed and verse range and the text you want is served up

Opera on the Series 7 or netBook offers the ultimate Psion web browsing experience

immediately. The only disappointment is that there's no search facility.

www.slothware.net/bb/BB.html

Slashdot

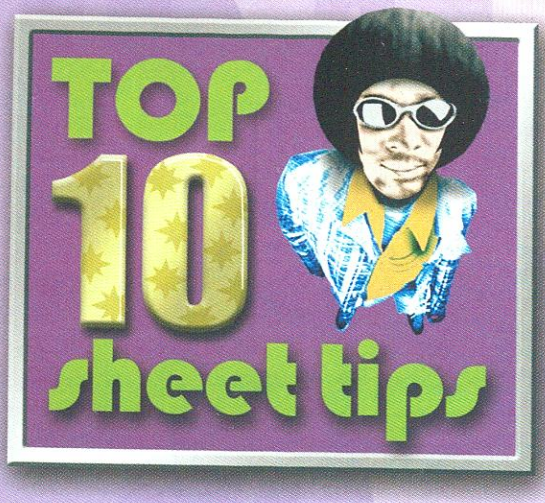
Branding itself "News for nerds, stuff that matters", Slashdot is the source for absolutely up-to-the-minute technical news. If you're interested in the goings on in the wider world of desktop PCs, networks and the 'net itself, then this is a must read. And, like all really well thought out sites, there's a low bandwidth palmtop edition.

slashdot.org/palm

Resistance is futile

Even if you've so far been resisting taking your Psion palmtop online, hopefully this selection will have persuaded you that the Web's not just about long waits and frivolous information. There's a lot of really useful content out there, and much of it is extremely accessible using nothing more than a humble Psion Revo and GSM mobile phone.

If you're still having trouble getting online then take a look at our comprehensive guide, in three parts, which ran from issues 30 to 32. Note that the information and addresses in this article are subject to change—nothing stays the same for very long on the Internet!



Jeff Harmed shares his ten top tips every Sheet user should know

Sheet may not quite have the advanced functionality of Microsoft Excel, but it's certainly the most powerful spreadsheet application to be found on any palmtop computer, by a considerable margin. Here are some tips for getting the most out of it.

1 Consider creating some of your spreadsheets as embedded objects rather than separate files. These can more easily be integrated with other relevant documentation simply by copying and pasting them. It pays to think what you want to do with the spreadsheet before deciding on exactly how to create it. Remember that you're not limited to storing spreadsheets within Word files—libraries of often-used Sheets can also be stored in Data files. Note that copying and pasting content from a standalone Sheet into a new embedded Sheet object won't carry forward column width and row height settings.

2 Use Sheet objects whenever you need to present data in tabular fashion in Word, instead of fiddling around with Word tab settings and indents. Sheet's word wrapping within a cell feature is particularly useful ('Format | Alignment | Wrap text to cell').

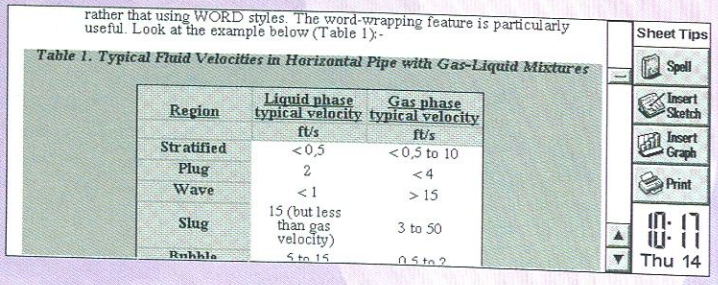
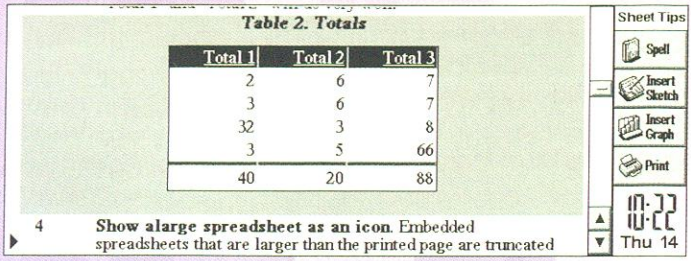

rather that using WORD styles. The word-wrapping feature is particularly useful. Look at the example below (Table 1):-

Table 1. Typical Fluid Velocities in Horizontal Pipe with Gas-Liquid Mixtures

Region	Liquid phase typical velocity	Gas phase typical velocity
	ft/s	ft/s
Stratified	< 0,5	< 0,5 to 10
Plug	2	< 4
Wave	< 1	> 15
Slug	15 (but less than gas velocity)	3 to 50
Bubble	5 to 15	0.5 to 2

Presenting a table in Word, using a Sheet object



Shading to the rescue—with a large embedded sheet shown as an icon

3 Make use of colours, borders and shading. These can be very useful to emphasise data, especially when inverting the normal presentation by using a white text font on a black-shaded cell, but avoid borders if printing is important. Due to a bug in Sheet, borders don't always print as they should. Trial-and-error and workarounds are usually needed to achieve a specific effect. In the screenshot above, the thick total line is actually an entire row of empty cells, shaded black and reduced in height.

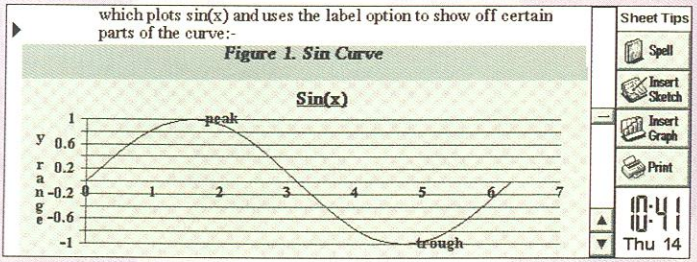
4 Show a large embedded spreadsheet as an icon. Embedded spreadsheets that are larger than the printed page are truncated when printed. They also are difficult to view on the small palmtop screen. To get best results, show the Sheet object as an icon ('Edit | Format object') and print it separately.

5 Use graphs to clarify spreadsheet data wherever possible. The graphing features of Sheet are very powerful and, as per the old adage, a picture is (usually) worth a thousand words. When embedding, use a graph in preference to a table if possible, and don't forget that you can use labelling to annotate your data as needed, as shown below. The text labels shown were included in a column adjacent to the original data and then referred to in 'Ranges | Change range | Labels'.

6 A day-of-the-week function (to convert a date value into "Monday", "Tuesday, "Wednesday", etc.) is missing from Sheet, but can it be simulated with the following formula:

```
=CHOOSE(MOD(A2;7)+1;"Saturday";
"Sunday";"Monday";"Tuesday";
"Wednesday";"Thursday";"Friday")
```

A labelled graph, shown embedded in a report



D8	=SUM(D2:D7)/SUM(F8:G9)				
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Week		TR ratio	4.562	
2	Employee	1	2	3	4	
3	34	2		4	5	
4	56		3		7	
5	78	1	4	3		
6	89		4		7	
7	91	1				
10	Reg. 1887 applies					

Sheet | Sheet | Graph | Sort | Print | 11:10 | Thu 14

Hiding content in rows 8 and 9 while keeping their content accessible

7 Hide cells using shading. One strength of spreadsheets is their openness, with all computations being displayed. There are occasions when this is either ugly or undesirable, and there are two options for hiding the contents of a cell. Often used is reducing the height and width of the cell to the minimum value (i.e. zero), but this has some undesirable side effects, not least the difficulty of selecting the row or column again. A better method is to combine some reduction (but not to zero) with the use of the same colour for both cell text and shading, effectively rendering the contents invisible while perhaps adding some extra graphical embellishment to the Sheet.

8 Use named ranges to make your work clearer. By naming individual cells or entire cell ranges, you can make your sheet easier to work with and clearer to understand when you come to make changes at a later date. For instance, if you have a column of sales figures (C2:C13) that you want to total, highlight these cells and use the 'Insert | Names | Add name...' facility to give that range a name, such as 'sales'. Then, when totalling the figures

Setting up a named range...

Univers | 10 pt | B I U | Σ f(x) | Sheet

C2 | 14219

	A	B
11		Oct
12		Nov
13		Dec
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		

Add name

Note: Value can be a number, text, cell or range reference

Name: sales

Value: C2:C13

Cancel | OK

Sheet | Graph | Sort | Print

Univers | 10 pt | B I U | Σ f(x) | Saved

C14 | =SUM(sales)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
11		Oct	£17,826			
12		Nov	£17,301			
13		Dec	£20,761			
14			£257,724			
15						
16						
17						
18						

Sheet | Graph | Sort | Print

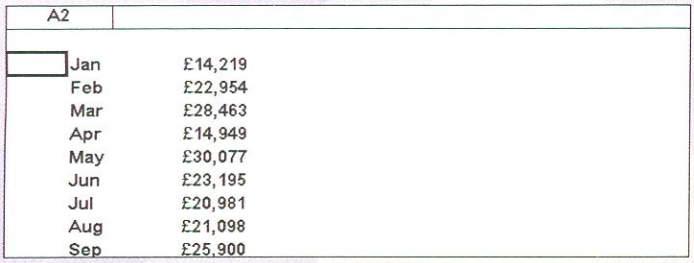
...so you can then use the name in your calculations, rather than an incongruous cell reference

you can type "=SUM(sales)" rather than "=SUM(C2:C13)", which is more meaningful. Remember that the names won't automatically be inserted for you when you refer to these cells (unlike with most desktop spreadsheets), making the feature less powerful than it might have been, but it's still a useful tool, particularly for complex sheets where every navigation aid helps.

9 Maximise your workspace. For many spreadsheets you'll find it preferable to turn off both top and side toolbars from the 'View' menu, in order to maximise the amount of space available for viewing cells. To increase the viewable area to the absolute maximum, go into 'Preferences' and try turning off the grid labels and scroll bars too. You can still see the current cell reference from the formula bar at the top of the sheet, and can scroll around using the arrow and page navigation keys.

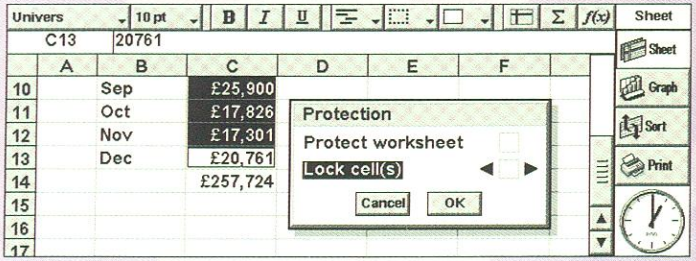
10 Use cell protection. It goes without saying that you should use password protection on all of your spreadsheets that contain sensitive or personal data. Beyond that, for complex sheets that you've spent a long time working on, use cell protection to prevent accidental changes to those parts of the spreadsheet that contain formulae or text headings.

When you turn cell protection on, *all* cells in the sheet will be protected *except* those that you have previously unprotected. To unprotect the cells you are going to want to edit, first highlight them, then choose 'Tools | Protection', and uncheck the 'Lock cell(s)' option from the resulting dialog. Once you've repeated this step for all the cells you wish to keep unlocked, go into the dialog once more, and set 'Protect worksheet'. A padlock icon will then appear whenever you select the protected cells.



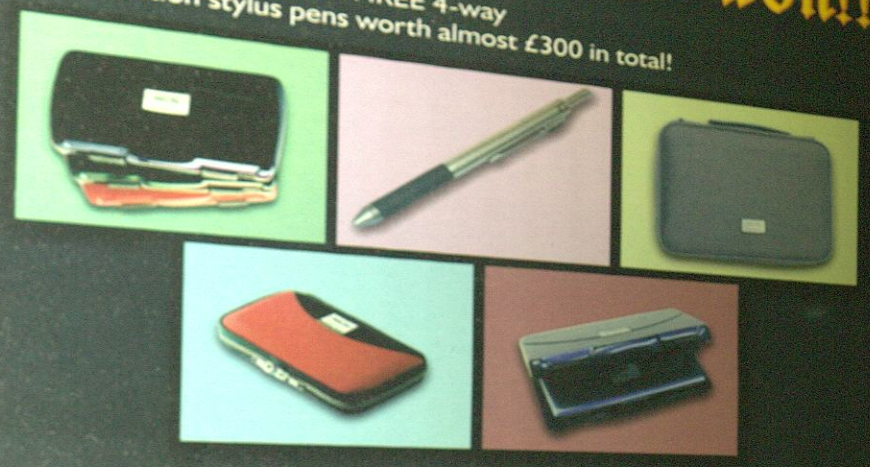
A nice clean workspace, with toolbars, scroll bars and grid labels turned off

Unprotecting the cells you need to edit, prior to turning worksheet protection on



8 great prizes to be won!!

FIVE PalmTec cases and THREE 4-way multi-function stylus pens worth almost £300 in total!



You choose your prize: any PalmTec case (including Pod hard cases for the Series 5/5mx in a range of metallic painted colours), Shell hard cases for the Revo in a range of metallic painted colours, Semi Rigid Cases for the Series 7/netBook, and funky neoprene cases in any one of three two-tone colours (available for any model), or multi-function 4-way pointers (suitable for all Psion models). All winners will also receive a free pack of PalmTec's colourful translucent plastic pointers for the Series 5/7 or the Revo.

All entries must be submitted by 15th August 2001. The decision of Palmtop Publications and PalmTec is final. Last issue's correct answers were: 1. Essential Disk Utilities, 2. NotePlan, 3. Hard.

Just answer the three questions below and submit them on the special page at PalmTec's web site on www.palmtec.com/palmtop.htm, where you will also be required to state your prize preference.

1. **What are Ace and Halo?**
2. **Which new game has three 'decency' modes?**
3. **Where would you find a 'Flight profile'?**

Getting started with...

PsiWin

Pete Sipple presents the definitive guide to Psion's PC connectivity suite

Whenever I talk to a Psion owner for the first time, one question above all gives me a quick idea of the kind of user I'm talking to: "What do you think of PsiWin?"

'Power' users tend to have a love/hate relationship with this essential piece of Windows software, a 'lite' user tends to find it "quite useful" and some, in their rush to get their Series 5mx or Revo out of the box, ignore the PsiWin CD altogether. This article will give those of you who've not yet fully explored PsiWin's features an insight into everything it can do, and in the process prevent the CD from becoming a fashionable drinks coaster.

PsiWin runs on all varieties of Windows PCs (and under PC emulators on certain non-PC computers) and is essentially a small collection of utilities, grouped together to perform the following functions:

- Backup and Restore.
- File Management.
- Printing via PC.
- File conversion.
- Contacts, Agenda and Email Synchronization.
- Copying text snippets between palmtop and desktop computers.
- Psion application installation.

There have been several versions of PsiWin over the years. The most recent commercial release is v2.3.1 (which shipped with the Revo Plus), although an Open Candidate, v2.3.2, is available for download with proper support for Windows 2000 and Office 2000. For the purpose of this article, I'll assume you have v2.3 or later, but note that some of the features may not be available if you don't have the very latest version.

Installing PsiWin

Installation is straightforward and the setup program (SETUP.EXE) on the PsiWin CD is fairly intuitive, walking you through most of the installation without too many surprises.

Once installed, you need to make the physical connection between your Psion and the PC. The cable supplied with your Psion comes with a 9-pin 'female' connector that should plug into one of the 'COM' (serial) ports at the back of the PC. You might find that it has more than one suitable socket—use any of them, but do note the number, e.g. 'COM2', as you'll need to tell PsiWin which COM port to use when talking to your Psion. In the event that you don't have a spare COM port or you have the wrong type of connector, you may either

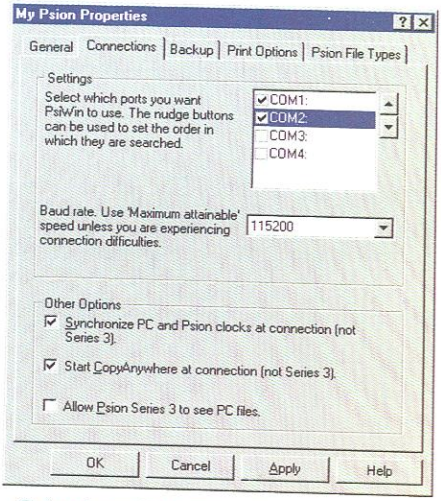
need an adaptor or will have to install a new serial card into the PC. Your computer supplier or a friendly 'expert' should be able to advise you on this.

Connection time

With the software installed and the computers physically connected, you should notice that two new icons have appeared in the Windows 'system tray' (next to the clock in the corner of the screen). There's a red and blue icon for CopyAnywhere (see below), but for the moment we'll concentrate on the 'wiggly line' icon, shown below.

This shows you whether or not you are connected to a Psion. If not connected, the icon is a flat line; when connected, the icon shows a zigzag waveform, which 'wiggles' when data is being passed in either direction.

You can also use this icon to change how PsiWin works. Right-click on it and you'll see a pop-up menu with 'Properties' as its first option. Select this to get to the 'My Psion Properties' dialog. Take a look at the 'Connections' dialog and you'll see two settings of importance: the 'Baud rate' (that you'll normally set to 'Maximum attainable', although you can drop this to a lower speed if you experience problems when transferring data) and the port settings. You should see a list of serial ports (COM1 to COM4). If you know which port your Psion cable is plugged into, tick that box only. If you swap ports, have more than one Psion or are not sure which port to use, you can tick more than one box, and by selecting a port you can use the up and down nudge buttons to change the search order.



Selecting which serial ports to search

Before making a successful connection, you'll need to go to the System screen, select 'Remote link' ([Ctrl]+[L]), set it to 'Serial', then tap on 'OK'.

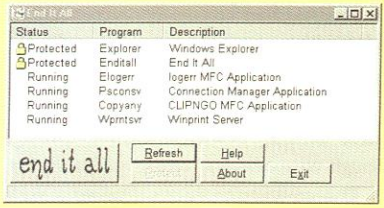
With everything in place, it's time to connect. On the PC, click on 'Start | Programs | PsiWin 2.x | My Psion' to start your connection (if it hasn't already started on its own).

The first time you connect, you may be prompted to 'Add a new machine'. This process identifies your Psion to PsiWin and makes it easy to manage more than one palmtop without changing your settings each time. If all has gone well, you'll now see some icons in a 'My Psion' folder.

Connection problems?

If you can't connect, you'll see a box asking you to retry or change PsiWin's properties. PsiWin has a reputation for sometimes being temperamental when connecting, so it's worth pressing 'Retry', just in case. Otherwise you may need to look in 'Properties' again to make sure you selected the right COM port. Other devices can sometimes 'upset' PsiWin, such as a modem or similar, plugged into a different COM port. If the problems persist, try using a different COM port, or change the order of the ports that PsiWin is searching, using 'My Psion Properties' as explained above. As a last resort, reboot the PC and try again.

Sometimes the connection seems to get lost after having been working for a while. Before resorting again to rebooting, it's worth trying 'Enditall', a small freeware program that allows you to shut down all non-essential Windows programs and processes that are currently running. In many cases, PsiWin works perfectly again after this has been run, especially if another application has been 'stealing' resources or a port that PsiWin needs. Enditall is available from *www.zdnet.com/pcmextra* . Note that closing Windows programs in this way can cause data loss and you should read the supplied Help file.



My Psion

'My Psion', which appears as a shortcut on the desktop as well as in the 'Programs' menu, is your main link to all of the features of PsiWin. There are icons for your Internal (and CF disks), a link to your archive of backed-up files, plus icons to allow you to change your PsiWin properties and to configure and run synchronization tasks. From the menu you can view a list of any Psion files that may be open on the PC, start a backup, convert files, install a new program or restore files to your Psion.

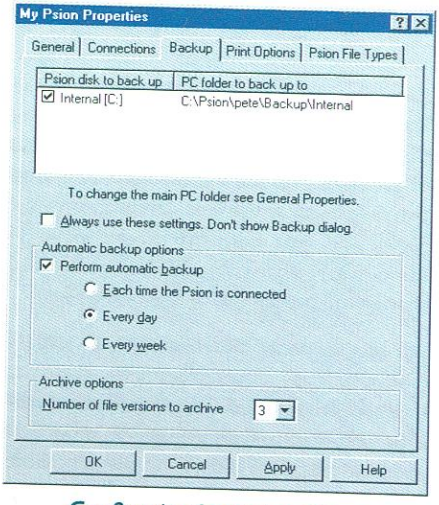
To take a look at your Psion's C: drive, double-click on the 'Internal' icon and you should see your \Documents folder, plus all of the other files and folders you've created. You're looking at the files currently on your Psion, and, just like other folder views in Windows, you can copy, delete, rename and change the properties of any of the files.

Of use to most PC users is the ability to open, copy or convert files from the 'Internal' drive. Windows users familiar with drag-and-drop will be pleased to know that you can drag files between your My Psion folders and those on your PC. Try this out by opening any folder on your PC from Windows Explorer or My Computer. Now, open the My Psion 'Documents' folder and drag a Word document from your Psion to a folder on your PC. When you do

this, a dialog should appear which gives you the option to copy the file or to copy and convert it to a Windows file format (see below).

Backup and restore

If you're not already using PsiWin for at least backing up your Psion, ask yourself just how safe your data really is. If you have a Series 5 or 5mx, you may already be backing up to CF cards, but for Revo users there is little choice but to back up to a desktop computer. If you haven't taken a backup for a few weeks, months, or, dare I even say it, ever—do it *now*! Psions are seen as stable computers where data loss is pretty rare, but without a backup you're playing Russian roulette with all your information—sooner or later, you'll lose it. Trust me.



Configuring backup settings

To start a backup:

- Connect your Psion and turn the Remote Link on.
- Go into 'My Psion', and select 'Back up Psion' from the 'Psion' menu.
- In the next dialog, place a tick beside each of the disks you want to back up.
- Start the backup procedure.

When a backup is run, it's necessary for PsiWin to shut down all of the open files on your Psion. If all goes well, the relevant applications and documents should be reopened when the backup completes.

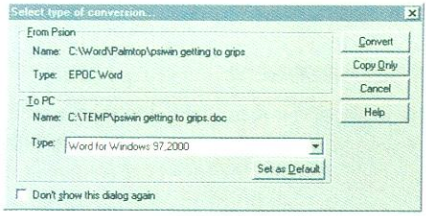
Worthy of note are the settings to be found behind the 'Options' button (or in the My Psion | Properties | Backup tab). This dialog lets you set an automatic backup either every day, once a week, or, for the really cautious, whenever the Psion is connected. You can also specify the number of file versions to archive (maximum of six) so that you can restore older versions of backed up files should you discover that you've recently made a mess of the latest version. Backups are stored on your PC hard disk in the folder that is specified under the 'General' tab of 'My Psion | Properties'.

For more details on keeping your data safe with PsiWin, see our feature 'Starting up: Backups' in issue 26.

File conversion

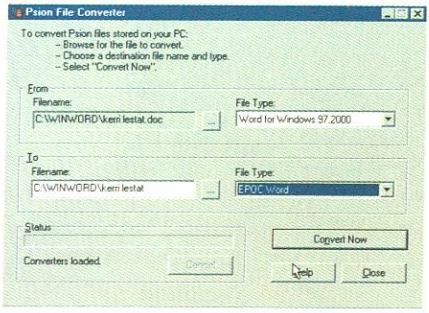
We already touched briefly on the main way of converting a file to and from a Windows format. The click-and-drag approach to file conversion works very well for most Psion users, as the system is usually intelligent enough to work out what you're trying to do. The conversion routine takes a look at

the file you're asking to copy, to see if it matches any of the document types that it knows about. It'll pick a converter and give you the option to select another if its guess wasn't right. If you're always likely to use that converter in the future, for that type of file, you can use the 'Set as default' option.



Converting a document

Psion has also supplied a stand-alone converter utility ('Start | Programs | Convert files') that allows you to convert between file formats on a PC without connecting to a Psion palmtop at all. This can be especially useful if you want to access a file saved in your backup folder, or if you want to email information stored in a PC format to a Psion user who can only handle native EPOC files.



The 'Convert files' screen

PsiWin hints

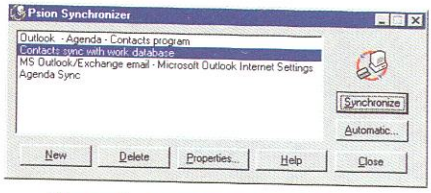
- You can copy or move a file quickly (without displaying the conversion dialog) by using the right mouse button to drag the file from 'My Psion' or from a Windows folder. As you release the mouse button, a pop-up menu appears, with 'Copy here' and 'Move here' options.
- You can use PsiWin to ensure that your PC and Psion clocks are set to the same time. To do this, go to 'My Psion | Properties | Connections' and tick 'Synchronize PC and Psion clocks at connection'.
- If synchronizing with PIMs such as Outlook or Schedule+, look for the PsiWin synchronization option that will have been installed in the appropriate PC application's menu—a useful shortcut!

For details of file conversion both with and without PsiWin, including a list of what can and can't be converted, see our in-depth feature 'Convert and Communicate', in issue 33.

Synchronization

Those of us with busy lives need to keep our information at home, work and on the move perfectly synchronized. It's no good having a diary if it's stuck in the office or several days out of date. To address this, PsiWin allows you to synchronize your Psion Agenda, Contacts and Email data with the desktop applications Outlook, Lotus Organiser and Lotus Notes (via the InSync Pro plug-in).

You can set up one or more different synchronization tasks from the 'Psion Synchronizer' icon in My Psion. It's worth exploring all of the options and tabs to get the most out of this feature. For example, the 'Advanced' tab of the Email synchronizer allows you to specify how many days worth of mail you should work with, and whether to synchronize your Outbox, Draft and Sent items folders as well as your Inbox.



Managing your synchronizations

Once configured, you can run a synchronization at any time or define an automatic synchronization of any event, which will then be actioned weekly, daily or each time PsiWin connects.

Email synchronization isn't built into PsiWin—you have to install a separate component from the PsiWin CD. This copies files to both your PC and your Psion.

The various options for each type of synchronization can look a little complex, but experiment until you get things how you want them. Also, consider backing up your Agenda and Contacts (C:\System\Data\Contact.cdb) files, just in case you don't achieve the result you were looking for!

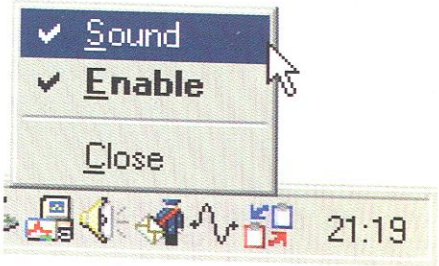
If you make any serious use of synchronization on your Psion, you're advised to make sure you have the very latest version of PsiWin, as some of the earlier versions are known to be 'buggy'. If you're not using version 1.15 of the Email synchronizer (See 'Add/remove' in the Psion Control panel), you can get this from the Psion web site at *www.psion.com/downloads* .

For a nine-page overview of synchronizing, see 'Starting up: synchronizing' in issue 25 and an extra section on Email synchronization in 'Email in depth' in issue 28.

CopyAnywhere

In my view, this is probably the most useful, and often forgotten, part of the PsiWin package. When CopyAnywhere is running, a small icon appears in your Windows system tray. It's either 'enabled' (two boxes and two arrows) or 'disabled' (two boxes and two crosses). When enabled, it allows you to copy and paste text from your Psion to your PC, or vice versa.

As an example, say you've been taking notes in Jotter on your Psion throughout a meeting at the office, and you want to copy them onto your PC to forward to someone else. With PsiWin connected and CopyAnywhere enabled, select the text you want in Jotter and press 'Copy' ([Ctrl]+[C]) on the Psion. Moving to the PC, position the cursor in a blank document or email and select 'Paste' ([Ctrl]+[V]) on your PC's keyboard. All



CopyAnywhere's menu

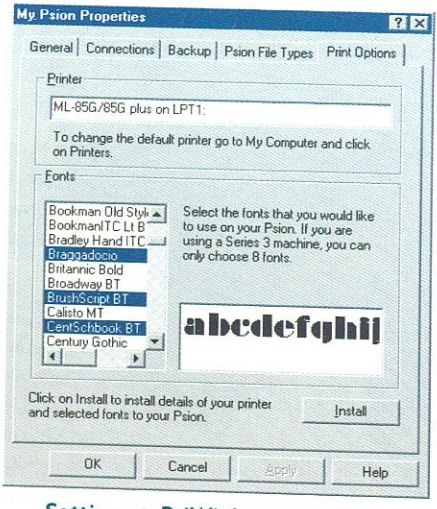
being well, your text should appear—no need to copy and convert the document or transfer a file. Note that CopyAnywhere uses each computer's clipboard, and that it's only possible to copy plain text using this method. Any formatting or images you try to transfer will simply be ignored.

Note the option to use sound with CopyAnywhere, often the source of questions from new users. Performing a 'Copy' on selected text causes the computer at the other end of the link to beep. If you've forgotten that your Psion's still plugged in and carry on editing text on your PC, every clipboard Copy operation will cause your Psion to 'beep' for apparently no reason, and

vice versa. Sound is a useful way of checking that the copy has worked, but can be annoying when you're only using one of your computers and wondering what's beeping. To enable or disable CopyAnywhere, or to turn the sound on and off, right-click on its icon.

Printing via PsiWin

PsiWin allows you to print to a desktop printer as if your Psion was connected to it instead. Before use, you need to configure the feature, selecting the printer and font(s) to be used in 'My Psion | Properties | Print options'. Once configured, you can print from any EPOC application that supports printing by changing the printer type to 'Print via PC'. For more details, see 'Printing on the desktop' in issue 31.



Setting up PsiWin's print options

Application installation

Most EPOC software is normally distributed as an SIS (Software Installation System) file. When double-clicked from a PC with PsiWin loaded, the EPOC Installer utility will start up, attempt to connect to your Psion and then copy the files across to the correct location on your palmtop. More details about this unexciting but vital PsiWin component can be found in 'Installing software the easy way' in issue 21.

Machine Manager

This small utility lets you add or remove 'associations' with your Psions. If you own more than one, PsiWin will create a profile of that machine, storing any custom settings. You can also see its unique ID and the date that the last successful backup was taken.

PsiWin CD

Finally, it's worth noting that there are a few more goodies to be found on the PsiWin CD, whose installer doesn't show its entire contents. If you want to see what else is on your disk, use 'My Computer' to 'Explore' the CD. Depending on which version of the PsiWin disk you have, you may find the Spell application, WAP browser, Opera web browser, Java runtime engine and some technical support documents.

Armed with the information in this article we'll hopefully see a few more PsiWin power users and a few more stained coffee tables!

Getting to grips with Macro5

In the third part of our series, Steve Clack looks at how to get the best from one of EPOC's most powerful third party utilities

In the previous two instalments we've looked at what Macro5 is, what it can do, and gone through the process of creating and running a simple shortcut to access a commonly-used file. In this issue we'll look at speeding up access to shortcuts and examine some additional shortcut types.

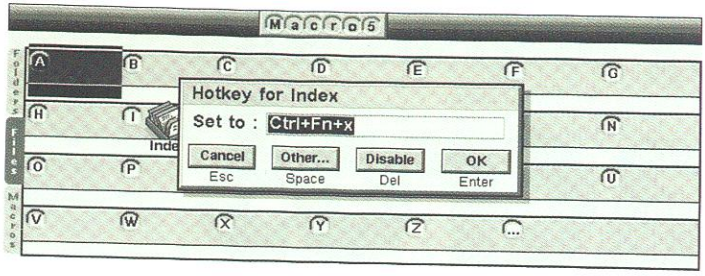
Assigning a Hotkey

Rather than accessing a macro from one of Macro5's three shortcut panels, as we did in the last instalment, you can assign a 'Hotkey' stroke instead. The disadvantage of this approach is that you'll have to remember what Hotkey combinations you've assigned to what macros, but the advantage is that you'll get the quickest possible access to your shortcuts, without having to invoke Macro5's panels.

As an example, we'll assign a Hotkey to the file shortcut we created last time around.

When assigning a Hotkey, Macro5 uses a rather inefficient method that requires you to re-enter a caption and, with most shortcut types, define the whole shortcut again. Here's the procedure:

1. Start up Macro5 from the Extras bar in the usual way.
2. Use 'Tools | Hotkeys | User defined...' ([Ctrl]+[U]) to access the 'User hotkeys' dialog.
3. Pick any one of the 'not defined' slots, and tap on it or choose 'Edit'.
4. As we're assigning a Hotkey to our existing 'Index' shortcut, leave the 'Type' line set to 'Document' and type in "Index" on the 'Caption' line, to identify our shortcut.
5. Tap on 'Next>>', then select your 'Index' Data file from the resulting file selector dialog.
6. Tap on 'OK', and select an appropriate Hotkey combination from within the dialog box. To do this, just press the keys that you want to use, *all at once*. Thus, if you want to use [Ctrl]+[Fn]+[X] (for 'indeX', for example), press these three keys together, and they'll then appear on the 'Set to:' line. The *really* important point to note is that if you assign



Just press the keys you want to assign to your Hotkey and they'll appear in the dialog box...

a Hotkey to a function that's already used by EPOC, the Macro5 assignment will override it! Unfortunately, Macro5 doesn't warn you of this, so if you inadvertently mess up one of the standard EPOC Hotkey strokes you'll have to go back into Macro5 and reassign your shortcut to a new combination.

7. Once you've picked a suitable Hotkey combination, tap 'OK' to accept the settings. Note that as well as pure keyboard combinations, by accessing the 'Other...' dialog you can use keystroke combinations that include the silkscreen buttons along the edge of the screen.

Now, whenever you enter the keystroke combination you just assigned, Macro5 will instantly invoke your selected shortcut. As before, this will work no matter what program you're in, but now you don't need to call up Macro5 on screen.

Note that you're only allowed to define 16 Hotkey combinations under Macro5. In practice most of us can't reliably memorise that number anyway, so the chances are you'll want to access all but your most frequently used shortcuts from the Macro5 panels anyway.

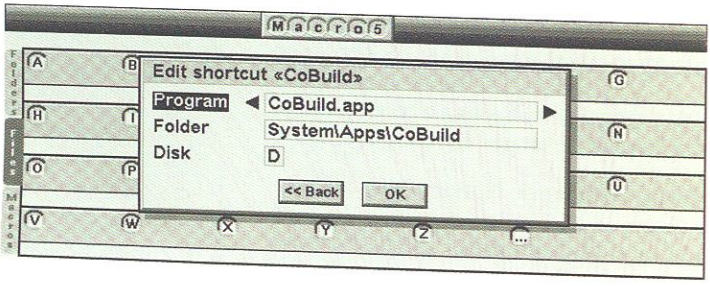
Note also that there's no visual indication of the Hotkeys you've assigned, other than going back into 'Tools | Hotkeys | User defined...' The Hotkey definition is completely separate from what appears in the three Macro5 panels, and you can have any of your shortcuts appear in either one or both of these.

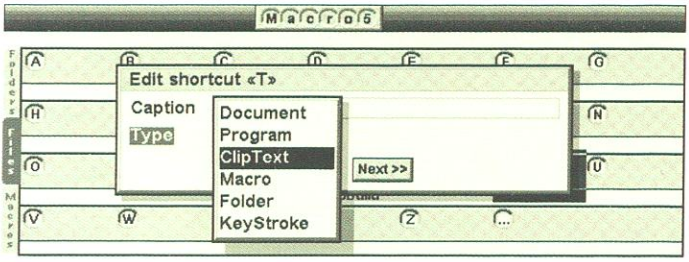
Program shortcuts

We've already looked at the first shortcut type, 'Document', which allows us to create a quick route to access frequently used files.

The next shortcut type, 'Program', is virtually identical, but you choose the name of

When assigning a Program shortcut you'll have to scout around your folders to find the right '.app' file!





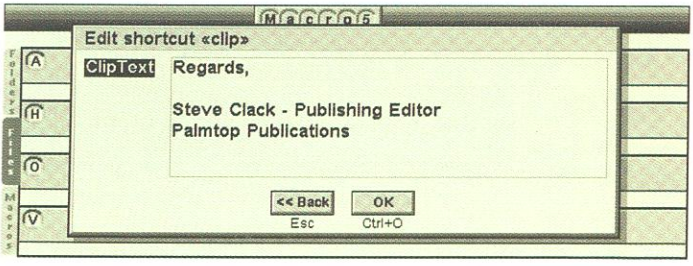
Choosing from Macro5's six shortcut types

a program to access rather than a specific document. Use this to access any of the programs that appear on the Extras bar, or any of the built-in applications. When creating a Program shortcut, you'll need to navigate to the relevant program folder within your \System\Apps folder, and locate the '.app' file for the program you're trying to launch. By selecting 'Z' (the internal ROM) on the 'Disk' line, you can select any of your built-in applications, such as Calc or Word. If you choose a program that allows multiple files, such as Word, such a shortcut will always take you into the last document you accessed from within that application, just as though you had pressed the appropriate silkscreen button.

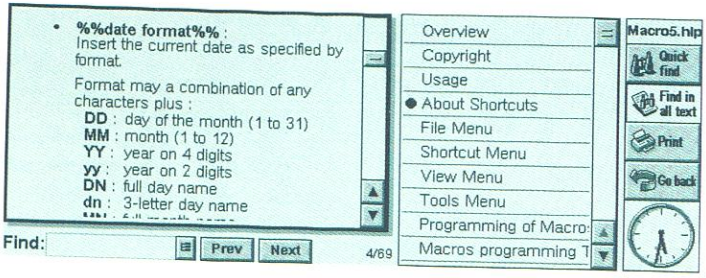
ClipText

Although there are many other programs with a more flexible ClipText facility than Macro5 (such as MagicKeys/AutoText, as discussed on page 84), it's still a valid feature. To assign a piece of ClipText, double-tap on one of the free panel slots in the usual way, type in a descriptive caption and choose 'ClipText' from the 'Type' line. Tap 'Next>>' and type your word, phrase or entire block of text, complete with line breaks as required. Whenever you access the shortcut, the entire block of text will be pasted verbatim into your current document. This feature is most useful for fairly large blocks of text or phrases that would be tedious to repeatedly type in manually. You're limited to 255 characters of text for each shortcut.

Another useful feature of ClipText is that you can use it to enter certain special items as part of the text. For instance, if you type "%%country%%" the shortcut will insert the name of the current home country, and if you type "%%date DD/MM/yy%%" it will insert the full date. See the Macro5 help file for details of other keywords.



Adding a piece of ClipText, complete with line breaks



Consult Macro5's online help file for some useful ClipText keywords...

Macro

The most powerful but most complex shortcut type to get to grips with, we'll look at macros in more depth in the next few instalments. In a nutshell, you can use macros to automate many aspects of Psion operation, from toggling your backlight on and off to performing complex sequences of tasks.

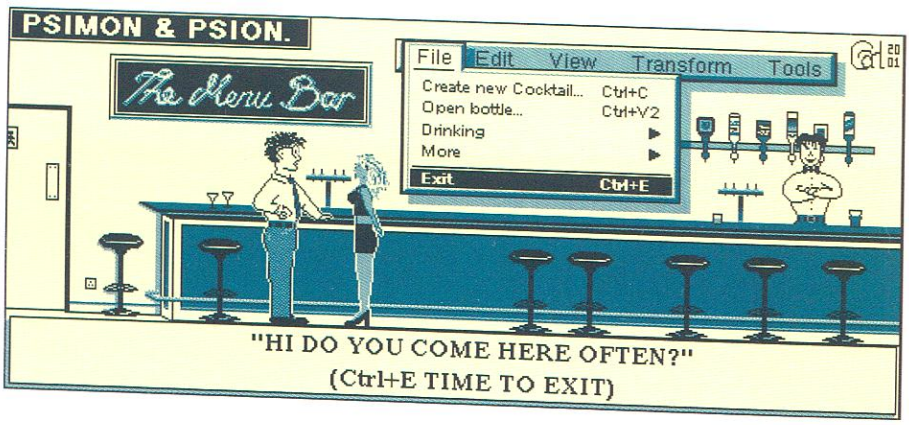
Folder

Just like the 'Document' and 'Program' categories, 'Folders' simply creates a shortcut to any folder on your Psion. When creating a folder shortcut you'll be prompted for the name of the folder you want to point to, and that's it!

KeyStroke

Generally less useful than any of the other five shortcut types, 'KeyStroke' is used to mimic any keystroke combination on your Psion. Its main use is within more complex macros, which we'll come to later in the series, but you can also use it to simplify keypresses. For example, instead of having to press [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[V] to access 'Print preview...', you can use your own, quicker shortcut.

Having now introduced all the main shortcut types, in the next instalment we'll show you how to create some macros to perform more ambitious tasks!



Getting along with TomeRaider

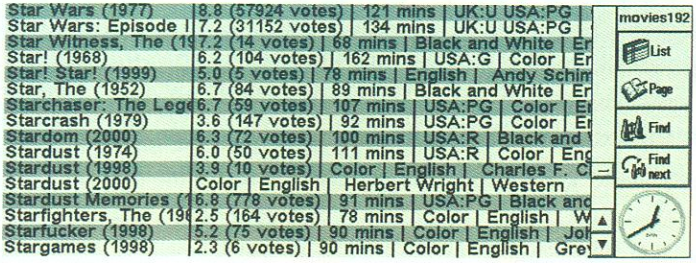
Derek Simms shows you how to get the most from this versatile cross-platform etext reader

When TomeRaider was first introduced two years ago, it was intended to replace the built-in Data application for the task of handling *very* large data files on the Series 5. The first TomeRaider file available was 'Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable'. This multi-megabyte file had thousands of entries, and with TomeRaider you could access any entry in an instant. Not long after its launch, dictionaries and even encyclopaedias (albeit fairly old ones) were being made available as TR (TomeRaider) files. Now TomeRaider is available on four computer platforms (PC, EPOC, Pocket PC and Palm OS) and there are nearly 1,500 free TR files available for it, many of which are on each Palmtop CD.

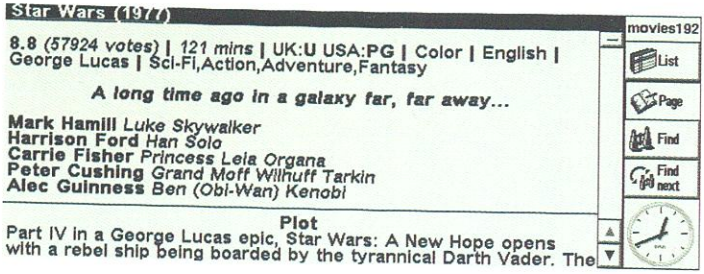
Using TomeRaider

Let's take one of the TR Internet Movie Database guides as an example. After loading the file, TomeRaider presents its List view (shown below), which is a scrollable, sorted list of all the films in the file. On the left of the screen you can see the titles of the individual movies, and on the right the start of the text containing some key facts about each one.

To move through the List view you can use the arrow keys, on-screen scroll bars or, most importantly, Quick Find. To use this feature you just start typing what you are looking for and it will be accessed (almost) instantly. In the bottom left corner of the screen there's confirmation of the text you just typed, and pressing the [Del] key deletes the last character you entered. Alternatively, pressing [Esc] will clear the search


Star Wars (1977) |8.8 (57924 votes) | 121 mins | UK:U USA:PG |
Star Wars: Episode I |7.2 (31152 votes) | 134 mins | UK:U USA:PG |
Star Witness, The (19 7.2 (14 votes) | 68 mins | Black and White | Er
Star! (1968) 6.2 (104 votes) | 162 mins | USA:G | Color | Er
Star! Star! (1999) 5.0 (5 votes) | 78 mins | English | Andy Schin
Star, The (1952) 6.7 (84 votes) | 89 mins | Black and White | Er
Starchaser: The Lege 6.7 (59 votes) | 107 mins | USA:PG | Color | Er
Starcrash (1979) 3.6 (147 votes) | 92 mins | USA:PG | Color | Er
Stardom (2000) 6.3 (72 votes) | 100 mins | USA:R | Black and
Stardust (1974) 6.0 (50 votes) | 111 mins | USA:R | Color | Eng
Stardust (1998) 3.9 (10 votes) | Color | English | Charles F. C
Stardust (2000) Color | English | Herbert Wright | Western
Stardust Memories (6.8 (778 votes) | 91 mins | USA:PG | Black and
Starfighters, The (19 2.5 (164 votes) | 78 mins | Color | English | W
Starfucker (1998) 5.2 (75 votes) | 90 mins | Color | English | Joh
Stargames (1998) 2.3 (6 votes) | 90 mins | Color | English | Grey
movies192
List
Page
Find
Find next

TomeRaider's List view...


Star Wars (1977)
movies192
8.8 (57924 votes) | 121 mins | UK:U USA:PG | Color | English | George Lucas | Sci-Fi,Action,Adventure,Fantasy
A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...
Mark Hamill Luke Skywalker
Harrison Ford Han Solo
Carrie Fisher Princess Leia Organa
Peter Cushing Grand Moff Wilhuff Tarkin
Alec Guinness Ben (Obi-Wan) Kenobi
Plot
Part IV In a George Lucas epic, Star Wars: A New Hope opens with a rebel ship being boarded by the tyrannical Darth Vader. The
List
Page
Find
Find next

...and its Page view

text completely. Quick Find will also reset itself if no keys have been pressed for a certain number of seconds (however many you specify in TomeRaider's Preferences).

For reading the entire text of an entry, just tap on it to enter Page view. If the text you are reading is a reference work then it will show the full definition of the selected word, for example. If the TR file is an electronic text, such as a novel, then the Page view will show one entire chapter. Once in Page view it's still possible to use Quick Find and all the other TomeRaider features.

Bookmarks and hyperlinks

Bookmarks serve as descriptive placeholders for any point in the text, and can be added with a single keypress. The default title for a bookmark is, helpfully, the title of the current entry. At any point you can list all bookmarks for the current file and go to their marked points with one keypress.

Hyperlinks allow you to move from one entry to another in much the same way as Internet hyperlinks. If the TR file contains hyperlinks then they will be shown in underlined text. Tapping on a hyperlink takes you directly to the linked entry, and pressing [Tab] returns you to your previous place in the file.

Getting TomeRaider files

Like a car without fuel, TomeRaider isn't much use without some TR files to access. The central repository for TR files is MemoWare (*www.memoware.com*), which also handles other popular etext and database formats. MemoWare's TR portfolio ranges from poetry collections of a few kilobytes to multi-megabyte encyclopaedias and dictionaries. Between these extremes are novels, movie guides, numerous religious texts as well as specialist encyclopaedias and reference works. Some of the largest files are too big to fit into the internal memory of most EPOC devices, so a CompactFlash card is sometimes needed.

When looking for TR files, remember that although TomeRaider works well as a standard etext viewer, its real strength is in browsing and searching through big reference works. To whet your appetite, let's take a look at some of the files available.

Internet Movie Database: The IMDB is the largest and most up-to-date movie database in the world, now available in various cut-down TR formats (ranging from 600K to 12 megabytes). Updated monthly, the TomeRaider version has information on nearly 30,000 US and UK cinema releases and includes plot summaries, cast lists and movie trivia, as well as other interesting facts.

WorldNet Dictionary: WorldNet is a modern dictionary and thesaurus that has been converted into hyperlinked TR format. There are a number of different versions, ranging in size from under 600K to 7MB.

Webster's Encyclopaedia: This has over 100,000 entries and definitions. Although not a modern encyclopaedia, it's a huge source of handy reference material. The file size is a huge 12MB.

Roget's Thesaurus: The world famous Thesaurus, running to 2MB in TR format.

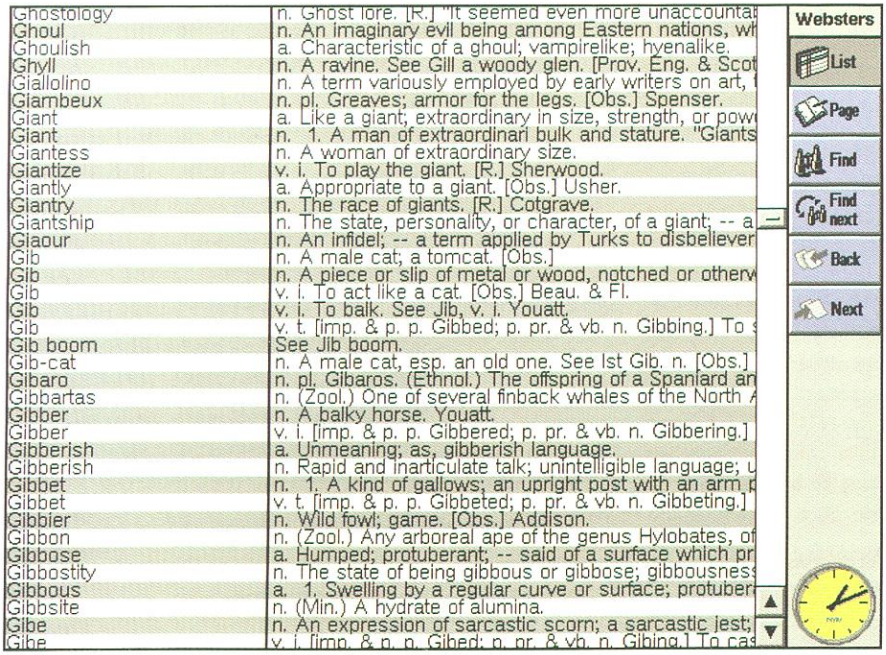
MemoWare has hundreds of novels, classics and other reference works in TomeRaider format. With MemoWare's powerful search facilities it's easy to find those TomeRaider files that will be of interest to you.

Making your own TR files

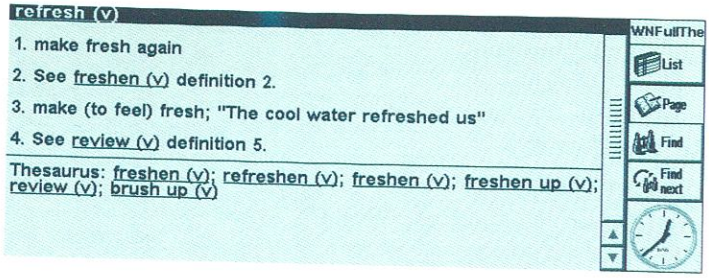
Although most of the big TR files are made in-house by PalmTec Software, hundreds have been created by end users and then released into the public domain.

Plain text

TR files, in their simplest incarnation, are very easy to create from plain text files. To make a new entry (which will correspond to a page or chapter), you just put a "<new>" tag before the intended title and keep the rest of the entry on following lines. Then load the text file into TomeRaider for Windows and it will do all the work of converting it into a compressed and indexed TR file for you. In this way, a plain text


Ghostology
n. Ghost lore. [R.] "It seemed even more unaccountat
Ghoul
n. An imaginary evil being among Eastern nations, wh
Ghoulish
a. Characteristic of a ghoul; vampirelike; hyenalike.
Ghyll
n. A ravine. See Gill a woody glen. [Prov. Eng. & Scot
Giallolino
n. A term variously employed by early writers on art,
Giambeux
n. pl. Greaves; armor for the legs. [Obs.] Spenser.
Giant
a. Like a giant; extraordinary in size, strength, or pow
Giant
n. 1. A man of extraordinari bulk and stature. "Giants
Giantess
n. A woman of extraordinary size.
Giantize
v. i. To play the giant. [R.] Sherwood.
Giantly
a. Appropriate to a giant. [Obs.] Usher.
Giantry
n. The race of giants. [R.] Cotgrave.
Giantship
n. The state, personality, or character, of a giant; -- a
Giaour
n. An infidel; -- a term applied by Turks to disbeliever
Gib
n. A male cat; a tomcat. [Obs.]
Gib
n. A piece or slip of metal or wood, notched or otherv
Gib
v. i. To act like a cat. [Obs.] Beau. & Fl.
Gib
v. i. To balk. See Jib, v. i. Youatt.
Gib
v. t. [imp. & p. p. Gibbed; p. pr. & vb. n. Gibbing.] To
Gib boom
See Jib boom.
Gib-cat
n. A male cat, esp. an old one. See 1st Gib, n. [Obs.]
Gibaro
n. pl. Gibaros. (Ethnol.) The offspring of a Spaniard an
Gibbartas
n. (Zool.) One of several finback whales of the North
Gibber
n. A balky horse. Youatt.
Gibber
v. i. [imp. & p. p. Gibbered; p. pr. & vb. n. Gibbering.]
Gibberish
a. Unmeaning; as, gibberish language.
Gibberish
n. Rapid and inarticulate talk; unintelligible language;
Gibbet
n. 1. A kind of gallows; an upright post with an arm
Gibbet
v. t. [imp. & p. p. Gibbeted; p. pr. & vb. n. Gibbeting.]
Gibbier
n. Wild fowl; game. [Obs.] Addison.
Gibbon
n. (Zool.) Any arboreal ape of the genus Hylobates, of
Gibbose
a. Humped; protuberant; -- said of a surface which pr
Gibbostity
n. The state of being gibbous or gibbose; gibbousnes
Gibbous
a. 1. Swelling by a regular curve or surface; protuber
Gibbsite
n. (Min.) A hydrate of alumina.
Gibe
n. An expression of sarcastic scorn; a sarcastic jest;
Gibe
v. i. [imp. & p. p. Gibed; p. pr. & vb. n. Gibing.] To cas
Websters
List
Page
Find
Find next
Back
Next

The 12MB Webster's Encyclopaedia, running on a Psion Series 7


refresh (v)
1. make fresh again
2. See freshen (v) definition 2.
3. make (to feel) fresh; "The cool water refreshed us"
4. See review (v) definition 5.
Thesaurus: freshen (v); refreshen (v); freshen (v); freshen up (v); review (v); brush up (v)
WNFullThe
List
Page
Find
Find next

A rich, hyperlinked, database entry

source can be made into a TR file in less than five minutes.

Here is an example from an unpublished classic:

<new>Chapter One

It was a bright day at Palmtop Publications, the smell of journalistic work was rich in the air...

<new>Chapter Two

"A letter of such import to the PDA world should surely not remain a secret, Mr Jenkins!" exclaimed Maude, donning her hat as she left for the ambassador's reception...

More power

Converting a novel to TomeRaider format is, as shown above, very easy. But what about an 80,000 entry encyclopaedia or a Bible guide with inline hyperlinks? For this kind of work TomeRaider uses tab separated files, of the kind that can be exported by common database applications, and HTML text formatting (such as bold, italic, underline and lists). The latter don't have to be used, but their inclusion makes for more interesting and readable files.

As mentioned earlier, inline hyperlinks point to other entries in the text. Good examples of their use can be found in John Greenaway's conversion of the FOLDOC dictionary of computing or the WorldNet Dictionary.

Here is an example of an entry from a tab separated TomeRaider file that has text formatting and hyperlinks:

refresh (v) → 1. make fresh again<p>2. See <a>freshen (v) definition 2.<p>3. make (to feel) fresh; "The cool water refreshed us"<p>4. See <a>review (v) definition 5.<HR>Thesaurus: <a>freshen (v); <a>refreshen (v); <a>freshen (v); <a>freshen up (v); <a>review (v); <a>brush up (v)

The result, displayed in TomeRaider, can be seen in the screenshot above.

Very detailed instructions on all aspects of creating TomeRaider files can be found in the help file that comes with TomeRaider for Windows. Although this is a separate commercial product, it can be very useful in the creation of TomeRaider files.

The Future

TomeRaider's developers have said that images will be supported in version 3, due out later in the year, both as in-page pictures and powerful 'icon images'. In the latter, commonly used images can be defined once in the file and then deployed efficiently throughout the text.

More information on TomeRaider can be obtained from *support@palmtec.com*.

Working with Sheet

Confused or intimidated by Sheet? Steve Litchfield explains that there's nothing to be afraid of, in the first of a major new tutorial series for beginners

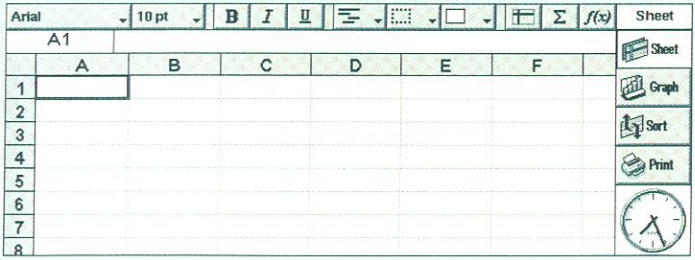
It seems to be a common misconception that Psion's built-in Sheet application is a complicated tool fit only for financial wizards and rocket scientists. Although these professions would indeed benefit enormously, Sheet is also a tool for every other palmtop owner, no matter what their interests or business.

If you've ever had to add up sequences of numbers, if you've ever laid out information on a grid, if you've ever wanted to keep track of your money or assets, if you've ever wanted to write a simple program but couldn't face learning OPL, then Sheet is for you.

A simple grid

At its simplest, Sheet is a grid of 'cells', a bit like squares on graph paper. You can put text or numbers in any format you like into each cell, along with instructions to tell Sheet what to do with them.

A trivial use for Sheet might be simply to lay out text information, such as a list of relatives and the Christmas gifts you've bought for each of them. Or perhaps a rota of which club member is on duty for each task, month by month. At the other end of the spectrum, Sheet can replace existing standalone programs, performing intricate statistical analysis of your numbers



The proverbial blank Sheet, on a Series 5mx

and even making decisions for you. It all depends on how far you want to go.

The Excel factor

It's worth mentioning the Excel factor at this point. Most of us will have heard of Microsoft Excel, the best known of all desktop computer spreadsheets. If you haven't, then you can skip this section.

Excel has become the *de facto* spreadsheet standard in the computing world and it's very probable that at some point you'll be given Excel files by your friends and colleagues, so that you can view their rotas, calculations, accounts, and so on.

These files may even give you ideas for your own spreadsheets, in Sheet on the Psion. But although PsiWin makes a good stab at converting fairly simple Excel spreadsheets into a form Sheet can use, don't make the mistake of thinking you can necessarily work on a spreadsheet on both desktop *and* handheld in turn, merrily converting in either direction as appropriate.

Part of the Excel ethos on the desktop seems to relish Excel's formatting capabilities, producing a colourful spreadsheet, perhaps the mirror image of an existing paper form. From formatting to embedded graphs to workbooks, the list of things that get 'lost' when converting can be fairly long. (See 'Convert and communicate' in issue 33 for more details).

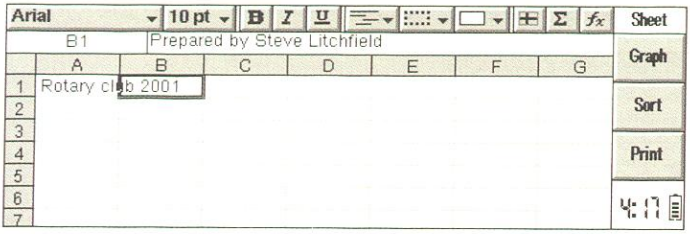
Don't be too discouraged though, as conversion from the Psion palmtop to Excel on the desktop is much more reliable, mainly because Sheet is a less ambitious application. Assuming that you're keeping the 'master' copy of a spreadsheet on the Psion in the first place because you want to have it always to hand, for updating information or for reference, you should find that converted copies passed onto Excel-owning colleagues will still look acceptable and work perfectly.

Labels

Tap on the Sheet program icon (or on 'Extras | Sheet' on the Revo) for the first time and you'll see the grid of cells mentioned earlier, together with a variety of labels and buttons. With all those cells to keep track of, you won't be surprised to see the labels. The convention for all spreadsheets is to refer to columns with letters and rows with numbers, with every cell then uniquely identified by a letter-number pairing.

For example, the top left cell on the grid would be referred to as 'A1', with 'A2', 'A3', etc. below it. And next to it, along the top of the grid would be 'B1' and so on. By default, the row and column labels are displayed, making it easy to 'read off' a particular cell's reference. Later on, when you need to refer to a 'range' of cells together, a colon will be used to specify the start and end points. For example, the first five cells down the left-hand side of the spreadsheet would be referred to as 'A1:A5'. But more of that later.

The grid may not seem large enough for your purposes yet, but don't worry. Like an iceberg, most of its surface is usually hidden by the limitations of the Psion's screen size. By using the arrow keys to move the current cell highlight further down (or across) the grid, you can see that scroll bars automatically appear to help you navigate.



Entering text into cell B1—A1's 'overflow' is about to disappear

Entering information

One of the cells on screen is always highlighted with a black border. This is the 'current' cell and is analogous to the cursor in other applications—it's where information typed in will appear. But not immediately. Just above the main grid's column labels is the 'input line', which is where the text you type in first appears. When you're happy with the text entered, pressing [Enter] puts it into the current cell.

Above the input line is a toolbar, most of whose icons will be familiar to you from other EPOC applications, namely font name and size, emphasis, alignment, border and shading, all of which can be applied to entire cells or ranges of cells. The final three icons on the top toolbar are for more advanced use and we'll come to their function as we move through the tutorial.

Incidentally, the main toolbar isn't a lot of use for spreadsheet beginners, so why not use [Ctrl]+[T] to toggle it off and give yourself a slightly larger display area for your main grid?

A simple example

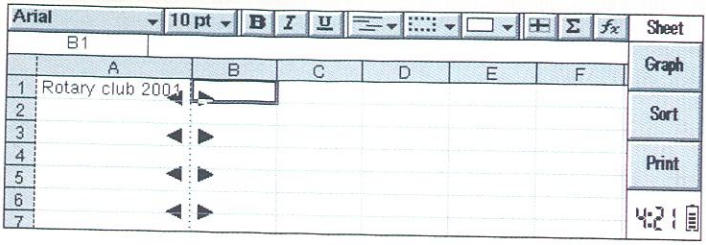
As with most things, the best way to learn is to do something for real. We'll start with something trivial, such as laying out text on the grid, for an imaginary club rota.

Using the arrow keys (or the touch screen, of course), move the current cell highlight to A1. Type in "Rotary club 2001" and press [Enter]. Remember that the text will start appearing on the input line and will move down to A1 when you finally press [Enter]. Notice that the text spills over into the adjacent cell (or cells, in this case just B1). This is quite normal and part of Sheet's intelligence in trying to show you as much as possible of your information at all times. It knows that column A1 is currently less than ten characters wide, but it also knows that cell B1 is vacant and so contains nothing that might be obscured by A1's content.

Let's prove the point by also entering something into B1. Use the arrow keys again to move the highlight to B1 and type in "Prepared by [your name]", i.e. substituting your own name, to personalise the rota. As soon as you finish the entry by pressing [Enter], notice how A1's content is no longer shown in full and that B1 is now the cell with vacant space to its right.

Luckily, it's easy in Sheet to make a column appear wider on screen. Locate the vertical divider between A and B on the column label line and drag it with your stylus to the right, far enough so that the contents of A1 are fully revealed.

Into cells A3, A4 and A5, enter the text "Key holder", "Cleaning" and "Emergency".



Resizing column A using the stylus

These are your own row titles (leave A2 blank deliberately). Remember, all we're doing at this stage is laying out text in tabular form, much as you'd draw up a similar rota on paper.

Let's pretend our imaginary club is run on a quarterly basis, so enter "Q1" into B2, "Q2" into C2, "Q3" into D2 and "Q4" into E2. These, obviously, are our column titles. For a monthly rota, these titles might be "January", "February", and so on.

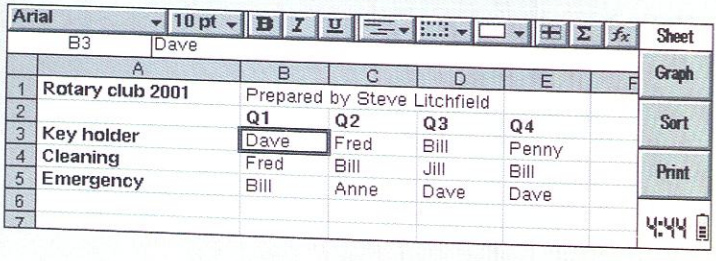
It's now easy to enter names into the appropriate cells, assigning responsibilities to individuals in the club for each quarter.

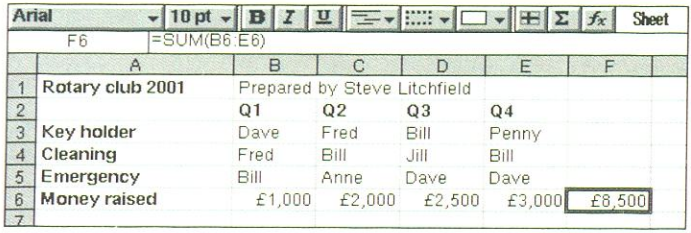
A final touch is to add some simple formatting, helping the row and column titles to stand out. Tap on the row label '2' and you'll find that Sheet automatically highlights the entire row, showing its contents in 'reverse video' (white text on black background). You can make the column titles more prominent by tapping on 'Bold' on the top toolbar. Ditto for the row titles, by tapping on the column label 'A', to highlight the entire column. Again, tap on 'Bold', and then tap on any cell outside the highlighted range to clear the reverse video effect. The result should be as shown in the screenshot below.

Over and over again

The example above is so simple that it hardly uses *any* of Sheet's features, but hopefully you can already see ways of using its grid layout to organise your own information. As you'll know if you've ever had to compile weekly, monthly or quarterly rotas by hand, a large fraction of the work is having to draw out the grid and titles over and over again, each time a new rota is created. Using Sheet to handle this sort of job means that all the row and column titles can be reused, with only the central data area erased and ready for new names. In a real example, with a dozen tasks and monthly assignments, and with extra titles, footnotes and explanatory comments, the time saving from reusing the spreadsheet can be substantial.

The finished rota example





	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Rotary club 2001	Prepared by Steve Litchfield				
2		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
3	Key holder	Dave	Fred	Bill	Penny	
4	Cleaning	Fred	Bill	Jill	Bill	
5	Emergency	Bill	Anne	Dave	Dave	
6	Money raised	£1,000	£2,000	£2,500	£3,000	£8,500
7						

Using the Sum function to add up a row of numbers

What about numbers?

It's at this point that you'll be wondering how numbers fit in. After all, aren't they what spreadsheets are all about?

Although Sheet proved very useful for the rota above, the same effect could almost as easily have been generated with judicious use of the [Tab] key in Word. But throw the possibility of a few numbers into the equation and Sheet comes out a clear favourite.

For example, say that the total amount of money raised each quarter needs to be recorded and totalled. Let's extend our example by using row 6 to record these amounts.

Move to A6 and enter "Money raised", then enter the numbers "1000", "2000", "2500" and "3000" into cells B6 to E6.

A logical place to put the total for the year would be cell F6, so move the current highlight there and tap on the 'Sum' icon in the top toolbar (it's the Greek letter Sigma—Σ). You'll see that what was previously a blank cell now contains the correct year total for money raised, and that the rather fearsome '=SUM(B6:E6)' has appeared on the input line as the cell's contents.

What we've just done is used the 'Sum' function, the simplest of the dozens of functions that Sheet supports. Again, adding four numbers together may not seem particularly clever, but bear in mind that it's just as easy for Sheet to add together forty or four hundred and you'll start to get the idea.

For the final screenshot above, note that I've also tapped on the row label '6' and used the menu command 'Format | Number' to set the row's number format as 'Currency', with '0' decimal places. Pure text items, such as the row title, are unaffected, but all numbers are then shown with your default currency symbol, as defined in the 'International' section of your Control panel.

A powerful combination

It's the combination of the organised layout of textual items and the automatic recalculation of numbers on the grid that make Sheet such a powerful and adaptable application.

In the next instalment, I'll look at a slightly more ambitious example and introduce number functions that would be even more wearisome to do by hand.

Software Gems

In the first of a new series, Steve Clack looks at some personal must-have software add-ons

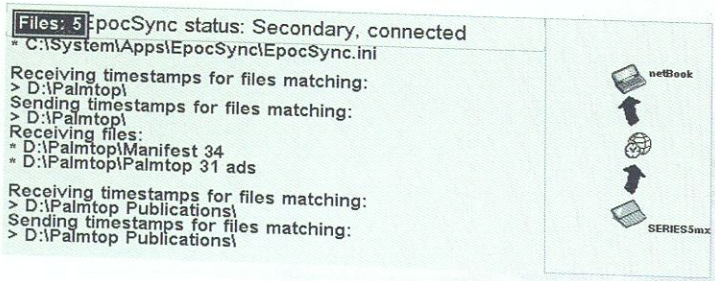
Apart from the obvious built-in EPOC applications that we all use from day to day, every Psion user has their own personal collection of 'must have' software. Over the next few issues the Palmtop editorial team and guests will take some personal perspectives on our own favourites...

Keeping in sync

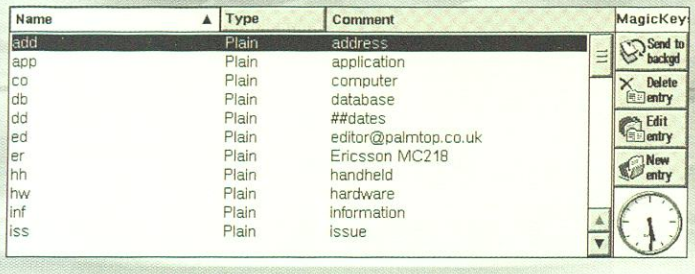
A surprising number of Psion users use more than one EPOC machine—perhaps a Revo and a Series 7, or maybe a 5mx and a netBook, as I do. Others may wish to exchange files with a spouse or colleague. For all such users, FreEPOC's excellent **EpocSync** application is quite indispensable. It allows selected files and folders to be kept in sync between two EPOC devices. Rather than simply beaming individual files across, EpocSync looks at both machines to see which files have most recently been updated and intelligently replaces older files with newer ones. Potential conflicts (where a file on *both* computers has been changed since the last sync) are suitably flagged. As you might expect, it can't merge in changes to individual records *within* files (it simply compares the 'Last changed' property of each file), but within this limitation the program works beautifully.

Easier text entry

Having relatively good keyboards, EPOC palmtops lend themselves well to large amounts of text entry, and I write numerous articles directly on my Series 5mx and netBook. With a helping hand, text input can be made even faster, particularly by using a program such as FatCatz's **MagicKeys**,



Keeping two Psions in step with FreEPOC's EpocSync



Speeding up your text entry with MagicKeys (or Autotext)

also sold in rebadged form as **Autotext**, by RMR Software.

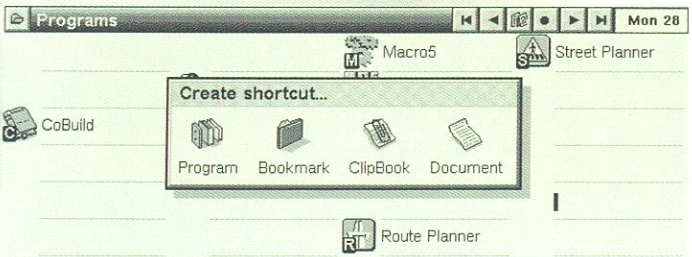
Similar to Microsoft Word's AutoCorrect feature, MagicKeys and Autotext allow you to assign 'short codes' to frequently used words, phrases or entire paragraphs of text. In this way, you can just type in a short code, followed by a hotkey stroke to reduce the number of keystrokes required. For example, I set the shortcode "pp" (followed by [Menu] twice) to type out "Palmtop Publications", "ma" for "magazine", "app" for "application" and so on. The software has recently been improved to allow insertion of Sketch items and other objects.

Speeding the system

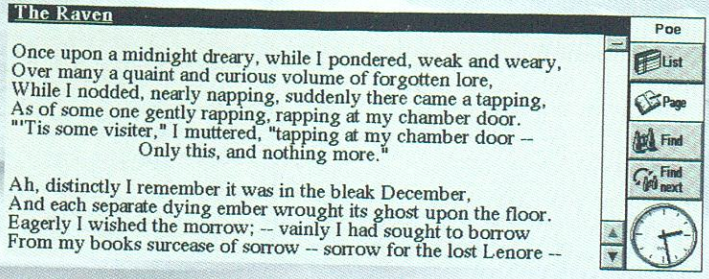
As well as accelerating text entry, I like to speed up navigation around the entire EPOC system, using Neuon's quick and easy **HotKeys** to provide keyboard shortcuts to open my most frequently accessed files and folders without having to navigate around the System screen. HotKeys also gives automatic control over when my 5mx backlight comes on and performs a shutdown of *all* open applications before a backup, relaunching them on completion. I also use Pascal Nicolas' superbly flexible **Macro5** to perform repetitive tasks such as changing text attributes with applications, showing/hiding the System folder and hidden files, popping up the battery status dialog, etc.

Ready reference

Apart from heavy use of Word, Sheet and Data, my Psions serve as a portable reference library. For maximum flexibility I use both the **Collins CoBuild** and **LittleSense** dictionaries. Neither is completely exhaustive, but between the two they do give adequate coverage. I also keep a number of other reference works in **TomeRaider** format, such as Roget's Thesaurus, the



Using Neuon's HotKeys to create quick and easy shortcuts


The Raven
Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visiter," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door --
Only this, and nothing more."
Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; -- vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow -- sorrow for the lost Lenore --
Poe
List
Page
Find
Find next

Easy access to compressed etexts and reference works with TomeRaider

Wordnet Dictionary, Foldoc Computing Dictionary, Webster's Encyclopaedia and several others—over 50MB worth. The ability to look things up in a couple of seconds on a Psion makes conventional paper-based resources look positively prehistoric when it comes to quick reference, and much faster than firing up a similar computer-based reference work on a desktop computer.

Acrobatics

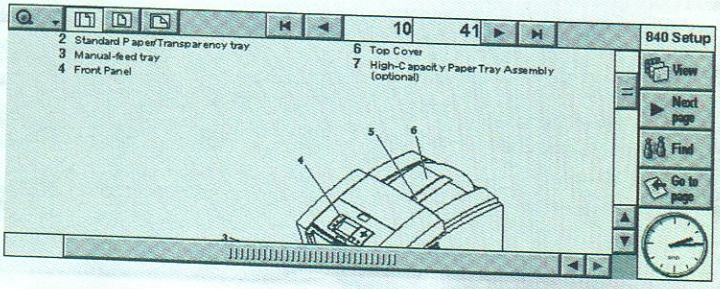
Adobe's Acrobat (PDF) standard has become so widely adopted over the past few years that no computer platform is complete without the ability to view PDF files. Thankfully, mBrain Software's **Pdf+** does a superb job of this, and is a great way to keep a variety of reference books, instruction manuals and product literature on your Psion. I use it extensively for keeping a library of software manuals, most of which seem to be supplied *only* in PDF format these days.

File conversion

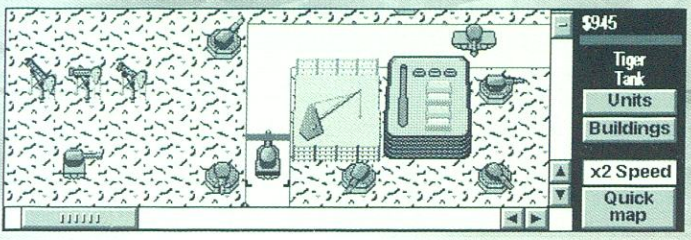
Because we use Apple Macintosh computers exclusively to publish Palmtop magazine, file conversion with PsiWin is not a practical option. I use Neuon's **nConvert** as the most efficient means to convert colour Series 7/netBook screenshots into Mac-readable format, and both nConvert and **XConverter** for conversion of various other Psion file formats into desktop equivalent programs. Armed with a copy of these two programs non-PC users need hardly miss PsiWin!

Fun and games

No computer is complete without a few leisure titles to stimulate the brain. My own penchant is for strategy games, with my all-time Psion favourite being Great Ape Software's **No Mans Land**, a tank battle game featuring plenty of skill and decent graphics. It's especially rewarding to play on the big



Pdf+ adds a capable Adobe Acrobat reader to your EPOC palmtop



No Mans Land is a great strategy game that runs on all EPOC palmtops

colour screen of a Series 7 or netBook, but almost as much fun on a Series 5 or Revo. As well as engaging the enemy, much of the game involves building defences and oil wells, which generate the revenue to construct new forces. Each game can take up to a couple of hours to complete, though you can of course pause and save your 'mission' at any point.

For something a little more peaceable but equally absorbing, Atelier's classic **SimCity** includes enough of the flavour of the desktop version to make it worthwhile, and will provide many hours of enjoyment.

All of the software discussed in this article runs on the Revo/Revo Plus, Series 5/5mx and Series 7/netBook, apart from HotKeys and Macro5, which won't currently run on the Revo.

Availability

EpocSync - freeware from FreEPOC, *www.freepoc.org* (reviewed in issue 31)

MagicKeys - $20 from FatCatz, *www.fatcatz.tm* (reviewed in issue 30)

RMRAutoText - £10/$15 from RMR Software, *www.rmrsoft.com* (reviewed in issue 30)

HotKeys - £14 from Neuon, *www.neuon.com* (featured in issue 24)

Macro5 - freeware from Pascal Nicolas, *pnicolas.epocboulevard.com* (featured in issue 25)

PDF+ - £12.76+VAT from mBrain Software, *www.mBrainSoftware.com* (reviewed in issue 32)

Collins Cobuild - £30 (CD)/$35 (ESD) from TomTom, *www.tomtom.com* (issue 26/33)

LittleSense - £13 from Necronomicon, *www.necronomicon.co.uk* (reviewed in issue 27/33)

TomeRaider - £15 from PalmTec, *www.palmtec.com* (reviewed in issue 28/29)

nConvert - £20 from Neuon, *www.neuon.com* (reviewed in issue 31/33)

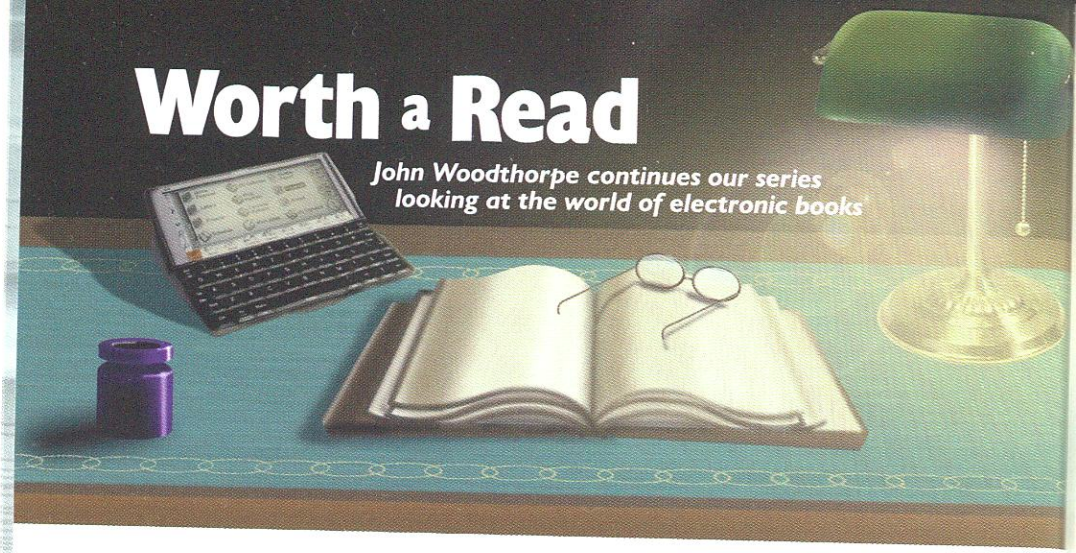
XConverter - £29.50+VAT from X.soft, *www.x-soft.cz* (reviewed in issue 30/33)

No Mans Land - $25 from Great Ape Software, *www.greatape.com* (reviewed in issue 25)

SimCity - $60 from Atelier, *www.ateliersoftware.com* (reviewed in issue 22)

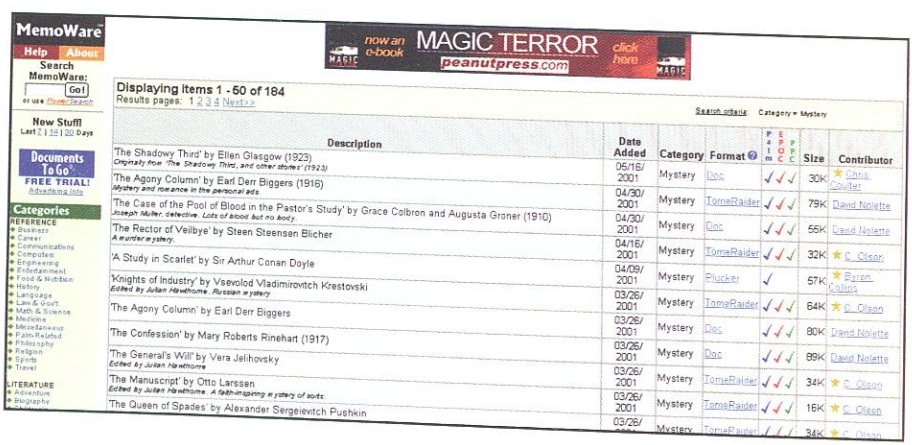
Worth a Read

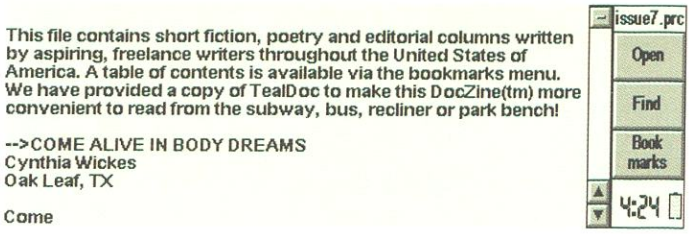
John Woodthorpe continues our series looking at the world of electronic books



Having covered some of EPOC's reader applications and commercial sources of books, it's time to revisit some of the free material in a little more detail. The site that probably has the biggest selection of texts in PDA format is MemoWare (*www.memoware.com*), which has well over 7,000 electronic books available. Many of them are in cross-platform formats, covering Psion, Palm and WinCE platforms. The Psion-compatible formats include TomeRaider and Palm 'DOC'.

All the texts are free, and cover both reference and literature. The reference material is especially useful, ranging from business, history and languages through to medicine, philosophy and religion. The Literature section is mostly comprised of 'Classics', ranging from novels, adventure stories, poetry, Westerns (mostly Zane Grey stories) and an interesting collection of children's classics. With the amount of content on offer it's easy to overlook the eZines section, with its selection of electronic magazines. There's an impressively large collection,




This file contains short fiction, poetry and editorial columns written by aspiring, freelance writers throughout the United States of America. A table of contents is available via the bookmarks menu. We have provided a copy of TealDoc to make this DocZine(tm) more convenient to read from the subway, bus, recliner or park bench!
-->COME ALIVE IN BODY DREAMS
Cynthia Wickes
Oak Leaf, TX
Come
issue7.prc
Open
Find
Book marks
4:24

One of the eZines to be found on the MemoWare site

some originally published in Palm DOC format and others converted by contributors. In many ways they're the hidden treasure of the site, especially for lovers of modern short stories.

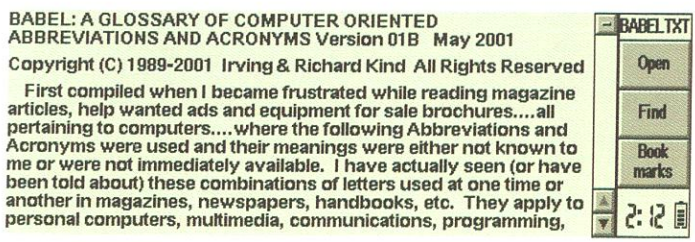
One of the other interesting features of the site is the Hall of Fame, giving the names and brief pen pictures of people who have contributed over 50 etexts to the collection. Many recent submissions have been in TomeRaider format (see page 75).

With all the material at MemoWare being free of charge, it's not surprising to find that much of it is drawn from project Gutenburg and other sources of out-of-copyright works. One of the interesting aspects of the Hall of Fame is that it not only encourages competition among those with the time to convert files to relevant formats, but it also provides an outlet for authors of original material, who are given a chance to distribute their writings for free download. Hopefully some of these authors will learn more about their craft this way and move on to producing higher quality work that will allow them to earn money professionally. The original material isn't always of particularly outstanding quality, but it's interesting to read it and try to spot an author who has the spark of creativity to 'make it' commercially.

One of the best aspects of MemoWare is the overall presentation, which is very clear. It provides easy access to the files without getting cluttered, and the search facility is excellent at finding an author or text that you are interested in.

You might argue that there's nothing original on MemoWare apart from a few self-published stories that could appear anywhere. This is missing the point though. The value of MemoWare is that it concentrates a huge range of material into one place, enough to keep you occupied for many hours, whatever your taste in reading matter. The site's creators are certainly putting a huge effort into maintaining their content and in the process are creating a resource that shouldn't be overlooked.

One of the vast array of reference texts to be found at MemoWare


BABEL: A GLOSSARY OF COMPUTER ORIENTED ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS Version 01B May 2001
Copyright (C) 1989-2001 Irving & Richard Kind All Rights Reserved
First compiled when I became frustrated while reading magazine articles, help wanted ads and equipment for sale brochures....all pertaining to computers....where the following Abbreviations and Acronyms were used and their meanings were either not known to me or were not immediately available. I have actually seen (or have been told about) these combinations of letters used at one time or another in magazines, newspapers, handbooks, etc. They apply to personal computers, multimedia, communications, programming,
BABEL.TXT
Open
Find
Book marks
2:12

Hot tips for hot games

In this ongoing series, we invite a game expert to share some winning tips and strategies

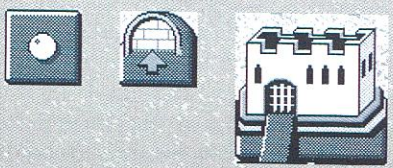
Bomz5, tips by Ewan Spence

Bomz5 is a maze-based puzzle game. You guide the little animated 'hero' around an increasingly complicated and chaotic world, gathering orbs to open the gateway to the next level—100 of them in all!

The Bomz5 world

Orbs and Exits:

Collect *all* of the Orbs to open the Exit to the next level.



Keys and Doors:

Keys are used to move through Door squares. Once you open a Door, you lose the Key and you'll need to find another one in order to open the next Door.

Rocks:

An impassable block. If there is an empty tile behind the Rock, you can push the Rock into that tile.

Bombs and Detonators:

Bombs come in two sizes: 'small' destroys the tile it is on, 'large' will destroy both the tile and the eight surrounding it. If one bomb is near another when it explodes, then it will set off a chain reaction.

Bombs can be detonated by a Detonator. It is armed by pressing the spacebar, then you have only a few seconds to get clear before it explodes and sets off any nearby Bombs.

Where to find it—and how to patch it

Bomz5 is available as part of Psion's 'Games Arcade' (see Palmtop issue 15), available from *www.psion.com* for electronic download at £29.95. Since its launch, Psion have created faster palmtops, such as the 5mx, on which the original version runs slightly too fast. A 'patch' file has been written, available from *3lib.ukonline.co.uk/arcadesc.htm*, and once installed there's an added option in Preferences to allow you to slow down Bomz5 to suit your own particular model. In this way, you can even set up Bomz5 to run on a Series 7 or netBook.

Pits:
Fall into a Pit and you die!

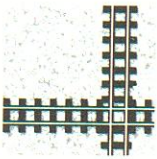
Crumbling Tiles:
You can step on this tile only once, after which it disintegrates.

Building Blocks:
Pick up a Building Block and you can construct a new tile over water—one per block. Stand next to where you want to build the new tile, then hold down [Ctrl] and press the arrow key in the direction you want to build.

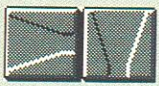
Switch Barrier Blocks:
Touch a Switch and, in the surrounding Switch Barrier Blocks squares, rocks will rise from the ground, blocking your way.

Moving Island Blocks:
These help you to move into new areas and can help to position you when using 'jumping' tiles. They may need to be freed first (using Bombs, Detonators or stepping on Crumbling tiles).

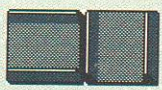
Railway Tracks:
Once you start moving along these, you can't stop.



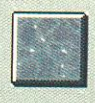
Turning Passages:
You can only enter these squares on the side where the passage is widest. It will then push you through and out the other (thinnest) side, after which the tile will rotate by 90 degrees.

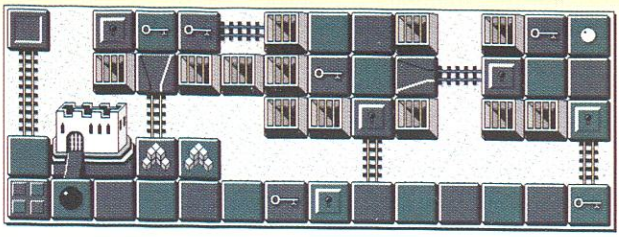


Corridors:
Much like Turning Passages, but you can pass through them in either direction. These can sometimes be rotated manually by using nearby switches.



Invisibility:
Makes you invisible, but only to yourself, not to your enemies—so beware!





Jumpers:

Stepping on a Jumper means that you jump two tiles, avoiding whatever is in the intervening square. Land on another Jumper and you then jump three tiles. Land on a third and you go back to normal movement.

Question Mark:

Push this into an empty tile and a mystery tile will appear in its place.

Extra Life:

If you die in a level, you can continue with everything where you left it, rather than starting the level from the beginning.

Enemies

Many Bomz5 levels are populated with enemies. These have one goal, to catch and destroy you. If they land on the same tile that you are in, then it's game over.

They will (in the main) try to move closer to you. Sometimes they may move backwards in order to find another route towards you. Be careful, as they can move diagonally too.

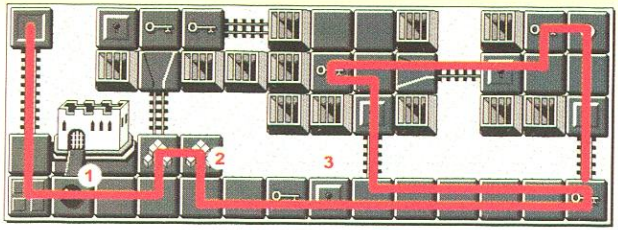
Luckily, you can move a lot faster than your enemies. You can also move Rocks around and use these to try and block them.

Don't forget to save!

Once you have an idea of what is required for each level, you may still be presented with some difficult choices. Bomz5 allows you to save your current position and return to it after dying, so you can jump straight back to the decision point, rather than having to plough through the entire level again just to get to that point.

Logical and illogical

Each level in Bomz5 usually has one puzzle or item that is the logical key to the whole level. By doing one particular thing, the solution to the level will become very clear. The catch comes in finding out what this step is in each case. It may be the order in which you gather the Orbs, or which door to go through, or where to lay a new tile.



The first thing you should do in any level is try the blatantly obvious—not because this is likely to work, but as an exercise to help you spot where the puzzles and problems lie.

Level one

Here's level one (shown at the top of the previous page), and how to deal with it using the 'logical/illogical' method.

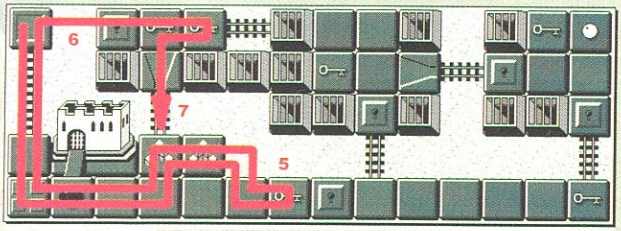
Referring to the illustrations at the top and bottom of this page, ❶ Push the Bomb forwards so that you can pick up the two building blocks. One of these is then used to build at ❷. Using the arrow keys, you'll then be able to journey through the level and pick up the single Orb—except that you can't get past the locked door at ❸, and the single building block is useless.

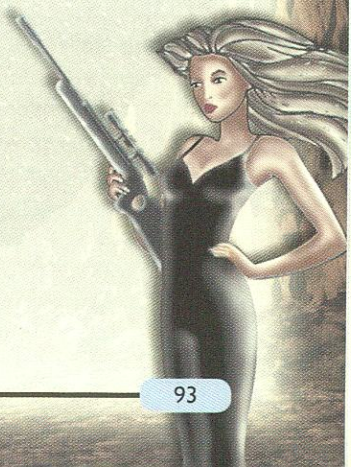
So, you can deduce that the trick to this level is to end up with an extra Key when you pick up the final Orb. Now you've learned this, we can look at the level again.

The two Keys in the top left of the level should draw your attention. With one door in, two Keys in the chamber, and a way out that doesn't use a door, this can gain you the extra Key you need at the end of the level. So once you've picked up the first Key at ❺, nip back and build a tile at ❻. Grab the Keys, leave via the one way Door at ❼ and carry on to finish the level.

Every other level can be solved using similar reasoning. In case you still get stuck, here are the codes for the first 20 levels.

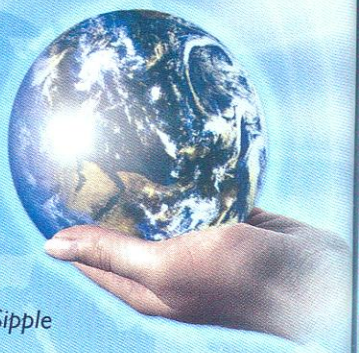
1-amber, 2-brood, 3-cobalt, 4-dark, 5-enigma, 6-fire, 7-glass, 8-heroin, 9-ina, 10-jibe, 11-keeper, 12-lost, 13-misia, 14-nova, 15-omen, 16-piano, 17-quill, 18-raider, 19-sorrow, 20-topside.





On the NET

Our regular look at what's happening online, and where to point your browser



by Pete Sipple

Buy, buy, buy!

If you're looking for a bargain second-hand Psion, there are a few sites well worth checking out. In some cases, the cost of what's being offered for private sale can be less than the cost of repairing an existing machine. Sites dedicated to general used bargains include *www.ebay.co.uk*, *www.qxl.com* and *www.preloved.co.uk*. If you're after something more Psion-specific, try the **Portal-PDA Marketplace** at *www.portal-pda.com/discus/messages*.

What's in a name?

Something of an old chestnut, but the meaning of the words EPOC and PSION is a frequently recurring question. Here's the latest discussion, plus an impressive visual explanation...

*"There were discussions about the meaning of EPOC, but what does Psion mean? I have some ideas like **P**retty **S**mall **I**ntelligent **O**rganizer **N**ow! or **P**aper **S**aving **I**s **O**lways **N**ice." (TGy@NoMail.com)*

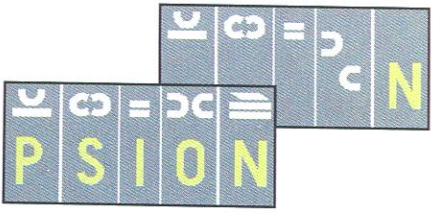
*"In fact, in 1980, PSI was already registered, and David Potter added 'ON' to be able to register PSION as **P**otter **S**cientific **I**nstruments". (Gerald.Aubard@EpocBoulevard.com)*

*"I seem to recall someone (it may have David Potter himself) saying jokingly in an interview that ON could be interpreted as '**O**r **N**othing'" (news@newth.net)*

"And what about those funny-looking characters above the letters P-S-I-O-N?" (DMApoodle@dti.gsi.gov.uk)

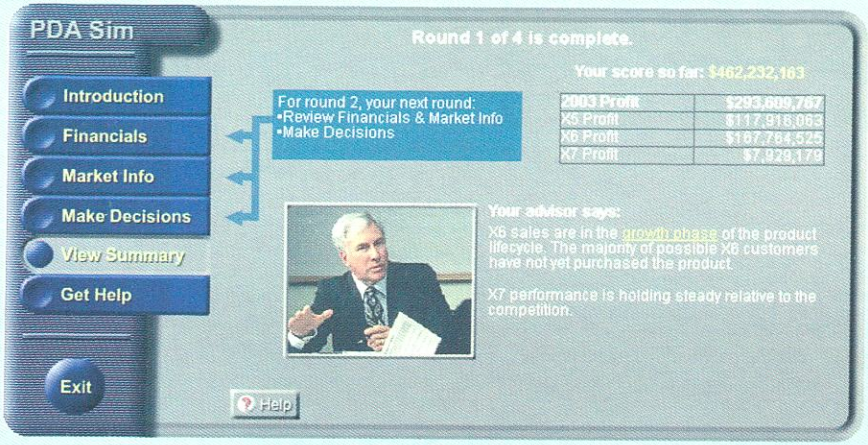
"It is merely the PSION characters dismantled into pieces. Just take a look!" (oystein.sonstad@notam.uio.no)

Interestingly, you can find an animation of the Psion letters scrambling at the following address: *cermics.enpc.fr/~lejeune/anim_psion.gif*.



Time for text

A new service from **Googol** is in its infancy—you can now have the latest EPOC news delivered to your phone as a text message (unless, for some reason, you're in France). The service is provided in conjunction with PalmTec. Messages cost £0.10 per go, but there's a free trial at *www.googol.net/sms/register.phtml*.


PDA Sim
Round 1 of 4 is complete.
Your score so far: $462,232,163
Introduction
Financials
Market Info
Make Decisions
View Summary
Get Help
Exit
For round 2, your next round:
•Review Financials & Market Info
•Make Decisions
2003 Profit $293,609,787
X5 Profit $117,916,083
X6 Profit $167,784,525
X7 Profit $7,929,179
Your advisor says:
X6 sales are in the growth phase of the product lifecycle. The majority of possible X6 customers have not yet purchased the product.
X7 performance is holding steady relative to the competition.
Help

Can you beat Psion?

"Congratulations on your appointment to senior management of Handheld Corporation". Forio's website is geared towards business simulations for management training purposes. One of their online simulations puts you as the Chief Executive of a PDA manufacturing firm on the brink of launching three handheld products. Your mission, to bring out top selling products, win a good share of the marketplace, and keep the shareholders happy. Sound familiar? If you've always thought that you could do better than Psion, put your dollars where your mouth is, and visit *www.forio.com/pdasim.*

Pete's plug

Finally, a blatant plug. For a list of the sites mentioned recently in On The Net, take a look at my own web site: *www.petesipple.co.uk/onthenet.html*

Wap's up?

With the sad demise of Trivanti, users of the Psion WAP browser may find themselves without a WAP gateway. To stay connected, you might want to shop around for a new gateway. Try either *kizoom.co.uk/html/help/phones/settings.jsp* (UK) or *www.wapdrive.com/DOCS/wap_gateway* (worldwide) for lists of available WAP gateways, plus setup information.

On the subject of the mobile Internet, at last the perfect use for WAP has been discovered—a way to cheat at pub quiz nights. Log on to *www.wapdrive.com/pubquizhelp* with your WAP phone or the Psion WAP browser for answers to common questions (not that I condone cheating nor will I be using it at the next office quiz...)

Hints & Tips

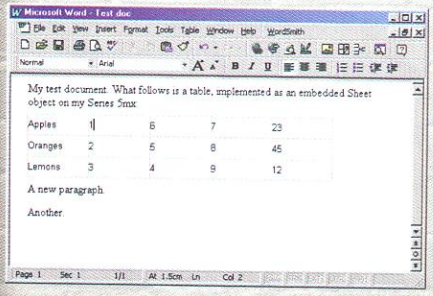
Every item published in this section wins the author TWO free issues added to their subscription!

nConvert Sheet conversions

When converting EPOC Word to RTF or Microsoft Word, Neuon's nConvert (reviewed in issue 31 and 33) will convert Sheet tables to bitmaps (i.e. images, typically in JPG format). This is fine unless you want to edit them later on the desktop.

The best way around this is to use nConvert's EPOC Word to HTML option. You can then import the resulting file directly into Microsoft Word (or a similar word processor). The table will then be fully editable.

Mark Ellott, Bristol


Microsoft Word - Test.doc
File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window Help WordSmith
Normal Arial
My test document. What follows is a table, implemented as an embedded Sheet object on my Series 5mx
Apples 1 6 7 23
Oranges 2 5 8 45
Lemons 3 4 9 12
A new paragraph.
Another.
Page 1 Sec 1 1/1 At 1.5cm Ln Col 2

A Sheet object in MS Word—editable by using HTML as a go between

Better fax templates

The advantages of using standard Fax templates is that they include special codes for automatically inserting the addressee's name, fax number, etc. Using templates is faster than creating a fax in Word and using Print to Fax, etc. Here is how I create my own standard templates:

1. I copy the template that I like from the Z:\System\Templates\Fax folder (on the System screen, use [Ctrl]+[Tab] to get the choice of the 'Z' ROM disk) into a freshly made \System\Templates\Fax folder on either disk 'C' or 'D'.
2. I change the file's attributes, turning off the 'read only' flag.
3. I can then open and change the template as I like, including inserting bitmaps, logos, etc. I just have to take care not to delete the special field codes.
4. Saving the template with a name of my choice, it will then appear as a new option in the Fax editor.

Ivo Bogaerts, Boechout, BELGIUM

SIBO no longer locked out

It appears that with the PsiWin 2.3.2 'open release candidate' Psion have made available for the last six months, Series 3 users have been locked out in the cold. v2.3.2 refuses to connect to Series 3a/3c/3mx palmtops, which is a disappointment for those of us with several Psions in the family.

Luckily, this deliberate crippling can easily be overcome:

1. Click on 'Start | Run' and type in "Regedit".

2. Within the Windows Registry editor, find the key HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE\PSION\TASKSCHEDULER.
3. Locate the name EC_EXTRA and double-click on it.
4. Change its value from '0' to "36dd" (hexadecimal).
5. Close Registry editor.

With the small tweak above, all SIBO palmtops should also be able to connect perfectly to PsiWin 2.3.2.

Linus Nyhus, SWEDEN

Tricky replacing

When recently massaging a text file received by email, I wanted to replace all instances of a 'comma plus carriage return' with a 'period and a tab'. Although Word has good search and replace facilities, it's not obvious how to insert special characters such as carriage return (CR, usually input with the [Enter] key) or 'tab' into its dialog fields. And it's especially hard when there are two fields to think about and only one clipboard to paste things from.

The trick is firstly to put 'period+[Tab]' into the clipboard by typing it and then highlighting and Copying it, and then to use the fact that Word's Find and Replace dialogs automatically use whatever's currently highlighted as the default search phrase. By highlighting the first instance of 'comma+[CR]' and invoking the Replace command it was then simple to use [Ctrl]+[V] to Paste the clipboard phrase into the 'Replace with' field. Word, of course, did the rest.

Unfortunately, it seems as though there's no way to use [CR] anywhere in the 'Replace with' field, so the trick above (and variations on it) are often limited to working in just the one direction.

'Sibo', via the Internet

The real thing?

When working on an OPL program, it's handy to do quite a bit of testing using the free EPOC 'emulator' for the PC (*www.symbiandevnet.com/downloads/sdks/er5sdks.htm*). Occasionally, your program might need to know whether it's running on the emulator or on a real ARM-powered palmtop. Luckily, there's an easy way to tell.

Floating point numbers on a Psion are represented in a 'reversed' form, which can be tested for with a few lines of OPL:

```
local float
float=1.0
rem Check the first four bytes of
the 8 for the float by reading a
long integer
if peekl(addr(float))
  giprint "Psion device"
else
  giprint "Emulator"
endif
```

Having the program auto-detect its environment saves having to keep commenting out irrelevant lines of code that only work on one platform or the other.

Mark Fleeming, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

Q&A

Get your Psion and EPOC-related questions answered by our editorial panel...

MP3 a no no?

Q Is there any way that either my Psion Revo or netBook can play MP3 audio files?

Ian Charles, Swansea

A **Unfortunately the netBook is very limited in its usefulness as an MP3 player because of Psion's choice of audio hardware. This is limited to mono 14-bit linear at 4-16KHz (EPOC uses only 8KHz). Compare this to typical specifications required for music playback, of 16-bit stereo audio at 44KHz. The netBook's processor would otherwise be quite capable of the task.**

One of our contacts has implemented an MP3 module on the netBook (taking less than 20% of the processor's capacity), but the audio hardware limitations and the positioning of the speaker on the bottom of the unit make it useful for nothing more than a proof of concept.

Quite apart from similar hardware limitations, the Revo also suffers from a much slower processor—another showstopper.

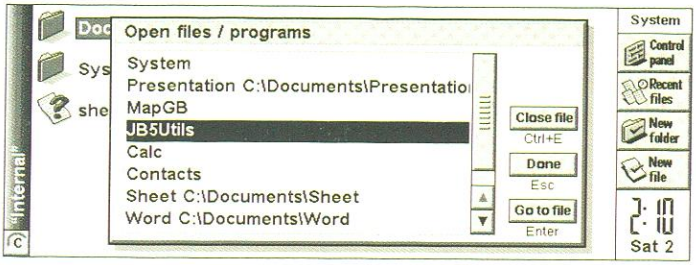
Hungry Psion (part 2)

Q Back in Issue 31, I read the question about the 'Hungry Psion'. I too have a battery current-related problem. Normally the 'Battery current now' on my Series 5mx shows 46mA. After using the 5mx for email in combination with Psion's IR Travel Modem, an extra 25mA is added. In the same way, it goes up in steps, from 46 to 71, 96mA, etc. After a soft reset, it's usually back down to 46mA.

It looks like something continues to run, using the 25mA, with each new session introducing another 'something'. Is there a way to avoid this? And is there a utility that can show what's *really* running in memory?

Zegert van Eijk, Rotterdam, THE NETHERLANDS

A **As with other similar queries we've received, it's important to realise that EPOC's battery current display is only an estimate, based on what the operating system thinks is turned 'on' at any given time. Of course, one problem with such a software estimate is that its algorithms may contain bugs, one of which we think you've hit. Some subtle combination of factors, or a clash with installed third party software, may have triggered this bug in EPOC and it's unfortunately unlikely to be straightforward to track down.**



Examining everything currently running on a Psion using 'List open files

The good news is that there probably aren't really any spurious applications hogging your memory and using up ever-increasing amounts of battery current—the numbers are almost certainly figments of EPOC's imagination. So don't worry, just use your Psion as usual and if the numbers start bothering you then do a quick soft reset. A periodic backup and soft reset is often a good idea anyway, resetting other sometimes wayward operating system parameters.

The System screen 'List open files' is usually the best port of call for a rundown of everything that's running on your palmtop, from where [Ctrl]+[E] tries to close an application and [Ctrl]+[Shift]+[E] kills it stone dead. At a lower level still, there are programmer utilities (such as Spy) which report on every active process/thread within EPOC, but their use is definitely not recommended for the average user.

Convert or copy

Q I am creating a large database using the Data application on my Series 5mx. Inputting the information for each card was becoming tiresome, so I used 'File | Export' and transferred the resulting file to my PC. This converted itself to CSV format, which I opened up in Excel and carried on entering information.

This is where my troubles began. I could only import the CSV file back onto my Psion as a text file (not as a CSV file), which ended up in Word format. Efforts to then get the information into Data from Word were less than successful, with everything ending up on the one Data card. Help!

'Caldtran', via the Internet

A **The answer lies in PsiWin's documentation. Rather than relying on 'drag and drop' to do the right thing each time, you should always think carefully about what you want to happen. Because you're relying in both directions on Data's import and export facilities, there's actually no need for PsiWin's default conversion filters at all. Certainly, on the trip back over to the Psion, your CSV file should be 'Copied' rather than 'Copied and converted'.**

The easiest way to perform the copy is to use the *right* mouse button when dragging and dropping, upon completion of which a menu will pop up, giving the choices of moving, copying and converting. Once copied in this way, the CSV file should be easily imported back into Data.

ISP blues

Q I have had an infrared Psion Travel Modem for some time now, but continually fail to get access to the Internet via my ISP (Ntlworld). I have input all the relevant connection information. Once connected, the Psion web browser shows 'Looking up host address', but after a while an 'Information' dialog box appears with 'Problem opening page xxxxxxx. Comms line failed'. Similarly, Email fails to open my Remote inbox. Am I doomed to failure with NTL?

Philip Jones, Melksham, Wiltshire

A **Although we've no direct experience of NTL as an ISP, it's almost certainly possible to access it via an EPOC palmtop. The usual culprits are incorrect settings in 'Control panel | Internet'. In particular, check your 'Addresses' settings: most ISPs allow 'dynamic' IP and DNS addresses, i.e. both boxes ticked in the dialog, although NTL's support desk may be able to give you more information on this if a specific set of addresses are needed.**

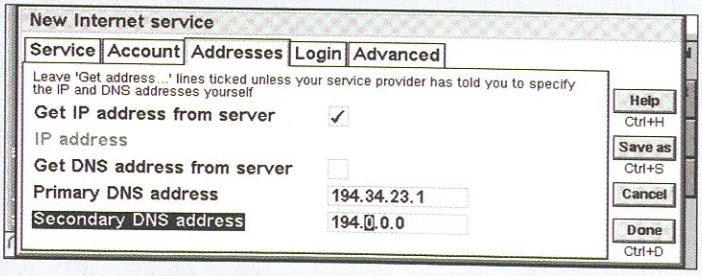
It's also worth noting that when debugging problems of this kind you should leave Email to one side, as an email connection not only involves making the Internet connection but also successfully negotiating with your ISP's mail server, adding another variable into the troubleshooting equation. Start your investigations with Web and, once this is fetching pages properly, then move onto Email.

Another possibility is that the Travel Modem is misbehaving. As reported in our review in issue 27, this unit is prone to seemingly random freezes and disconnections. From reading messages on the Psion newsgroups it seems that many other people have had similar problems, even with recent production units. Borrow a friend's infrared-equipped mobile phone and try again. If this also doesn't work, borrow or buy a traditional 'hard-wired' modem. See more troubleshooting tips see our comprehensive tutorial on getting online which ran from issue 30 to 32.

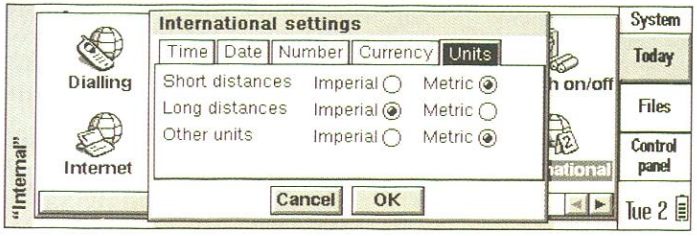
Low priority

Q I have a number of to-do lists on my Series 5 but I can't set priorities on new items—the priority box is not available to allow me to alter it. I used to have this option on other to-do lists but I deleted these some time ago. How do I get the option for priorities back?

Duncan Rounding, Reading, Berkshire



Starting to fill in specific DNS server addresses, on instruction from an ISP



To change between metric and imperial units you need to access the Control panel

A **Within 'To-do lists | To-do list preferences', you'll find the 'Sort order' set to 'Manual', i.e. new items are simply added to the top of the existing list. Changing this setting to either 'Date then priority' or 'Priority then date' will restore the missing priority fields.**

Modifying Data fields

Q On my Psion 5mx, I'm trying in vain to modify the characteristics of the various fields I have created within Data. More specifically, the number of characters in each field.

Stéphane Sage, St Martin D'Uriage, FRANCE

A **It's a limitation of Data that you can't change field types or lengths once you've defined the field, though you can add new ones if you wish. Even if you're setting up a new database and haven't entered any data into it yet, if you change your mind on how you want a file set up then you're forced to delete that field and re-define a new one in its place.**

There is, however, a fairly straightforward workaround. Just use 'File | More | Export as text file...', to make a copy of your existing data, set up a new version of the database template with the new field lengths, then use 'File | More | Import text file...', from within the new database to bring in your old data. Remember, of course, that if you shorten any of the field lengths in the new file then you risk truncating your data to fit inside the new limits.

When performing the export/import procedure, it's vital that you set the same 'Options...' values in both directions. You can safely leave these at their default values *unless* your data contains commas, in which case set 'Label separator' to 'Tab', or any other character that doesn't appear anywhere within your text fields.

Changing units in Word

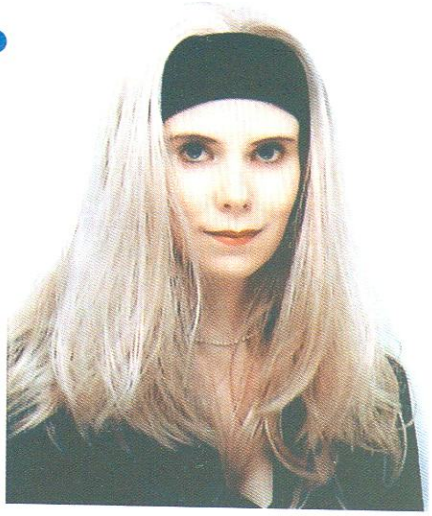
Q When I try to set tabs or indents in Word or adjust page margins, the units always come up in inches, and I can't find any way to change it to metric. Is there no way to do this?

Howard Asbury, Tamworth, Staffordshire

A **There certainly is, but rather confusingly you can't do it from within Word. Instead, you need to go into the Control panel, select 'International', and set 'Short distances' to 'Metric' under the 'Units' tab. This sets the measurement units globally for all applications. You can even change units in mid document if you wish.**

Musings...

Debbie Barham takes a satirical look at some Psion-owning stereotypes



Sociologists, bless 'em, are terribly keen on finding new words to classify us. First it was "Yuppies" (Young, Upwardly-mobile Professional People), then "Dinkies" (Dual Income, No Kids), "Nimbies" (Not In My Back Yard) and more recently "Sitcoms" (Single Income, Two Careers, One Mortgage). As a keen amateur anthropologist—OK, a nosey parker—I've noticed that palmtop users do, in fact, conform to several distinct personality types.

You are what you eat (thus Geri Halliwell now resembles a breadstick with a grape on the end of it, and the Duchess of York a large jammy tart) but in the digital world, you are what you compute with. Try this little psychological test if you don't believe me: picture a Linux user and a Windows user. Is Mr Linux wearing a dubious pullover and wiping traces of Real Ale foam from his copious facial hair? Yes? Is Mr Windows wearing an anguished expression, thumping his PC and tearing his hair out at the roots? There. Proves my point.

The majority of people reading this will of course be PSIONS—"People Spending Income On New Software"—but which Psion are YOU? Find out with my handy I-Spy guide....

The Stylus Icon. Model owned: doesn't know. But it's got a limited edition mahogany-effect casing and a Mulberry holster that cost almost as much as the machine itself. Defining characteristics: regards the Psion as purely an expensive fashion accessory. Most likely to: ask if Psion could make the casing of the Series 5 a bit shinier so it can double as a compact mirror. Quote: "£500 for a gold-plated stylus? Bargain!"

The PDAtrician. Model owned: *everything*, all soldered together. Currently connects to the 'net using a 2400 baud home-made modem and a 'customised' Series 5 that he's somehow adapted to run Linux. Most likely to: fix your machine when you get fed up waiting for the support hotline. Quote: "If you're not using that old Series 3, can I have it for spares?"

The Revo-lutionary. Model owned: Revo, customised with spray-painted graffiti and radical stickers. Defining characteristics: uses his Psion as a mobile access device for co-ordinating groups of anti-globalisation protestors during mass protests, hacking into the McDonalds website and sending threatening email to President Bush on behalf of environmental protestors. Most

likely to: use rechargeable batteries in a solar powered charger. Quote: "Damn! Why didn't I recharge my batteries *before* chaining myself to this nuclear warhead?"

The Downloaded Lad. Model owned: Series 3c. Defining characteristics: has spent the last five years perfecting his Tetris skills and bulk-mailing every female in the office with scurrilous suggestions while giving his boss the impression that he's working really, really hard. Most likely to: try to browse porn websites on a 4-inch green screen. Quote: Newsgroup posting "How can I configure my IRDA port to operate the chairman's infrared car lock?"

The Diskette Diva. Model owned: Siena, because it has pretty covers that she can change to match her outfit. Defining characteristics: has abandoned 'Little Black Book' in favour of little black gadget which stores even more phone numbers. Like the Siena, she's a very slim model without much useable memory. Fortunately she has the physique of a slightly slimmed-down stylus and is therefore one of the few human people with fingers small enough to touch-type on its keypad. Most likely to: Beam her details to another palmtop owner. Even if he hasn't asked for them. Quote: "I'm a very well-connected woman..."

The MX Maniac. Model owned: 3mx, 5mx. Has already pre-ordered a 7mx, even though Psion haven't actually decided to make one yet. Defining characteristics: absolutely *has* to have the latest upgrade as soon as it's available (before palmtops were invented, had to satisfy his urge by buying a new car every time the latest registration plates came out). Most likely to: Fly to Japan just to buy a new palmtop. Quote: "For sale, netBook 32MB. £500. Upgrade forces sale."

The PC Plodder. Model owned: Series 3. Defining characteristics: bought the Series 3 when it first came out and still hasn't succeeded in synchronising it with his PC. Reluctant to upgrade because he'll have to re-learn everything. Most likely to: be blacklisted by Tech Support. Quote: "Email to: techsupport@psion.co.uk, Re:HEELLPP!!! Have got batteries wrong way round (yet again)".

The Psiontologist. Model owned: None. Defining characteristics: Continually eulogises with religious fervour about how marvellous palmtop computers are, despite not actually owning one. Lest anyone realise how technically incompetent he actually is. Most likely to: have played with the demo model in PC World. Once. Quote: "Well, speaking as something of an authority on all things Psion-related..."

The Serious Seven. Model owned: netBook, with GPS and modem. Defining characteristics: workaholic. Regards his Psion as his life support machine and can't bear to be torn away from his spreadsheets. Life completely run by his Agenda ("Brrrrrrring!!!! Alarm! 6.30pm, Attend Workaholics Anonymous support group meeting."). Most likely to: have a nervous breakdown when his backup battery runs out. Quote: "Am I coming for a quick one down the pub? Wait a minute, I'll check my netBook and find out".

The Pocket Picker. Model owned: Yours. Defining characteristics: criminal record. One of the few people who is actually still making money out of the palmtop market—by stealing them from poseurs who tout them about in the pub. Most likely to: offer to sell you a "completely kosher, mate" second-hand machine which looks surprisingly similar to the one you've just had stolen. Quote: "It wasn't me, officer".

Psion/EPOC models at a glance

	Organiser I	1984	£99	2K	Psion
	Organiser II CM	1986	£99	8K	Psion
	Organiser II XP	1986	£139	16K/32K	Psion
	Organiser II LZ	1988	£149/189	32K/64K	Psion
	MC200	1989	£495	128K	SIBO
	MC400/Word	1989	£695	256K	SIBO
	MC600	1989	£1295	768K	DOS 3.2
	Series 3	1991	£199/£249	128K/256K	SIBO
	Series 3a	1993	£279/£329	256K/512K	SIBO
	Series 3a	1995	£339/£399	1MB/2MB	SIBO
	Workabout	1995	Various	Various	SIBO and custom
	Series 3c	1996	£339/£399	1MB/2MB	SIBO
	Siena	1996	£169/£229	512K/1MB	SIBO
	Series 5	1997	£439/£499	4MB/8MB	EPOC
	Geofox One	1997	£385/£599	4MB/16MB	EPOC
	Series 3mx	1998	£269	2MB	SIBO
	Workabout mx	1998	Various	Various	SIBO and custom
	Series 5mx	1999	£429	16MB	EPOC
	MC218	1999	£479	16MB	EPOC
	Osaris	1999	£219/£279	4MB/8MB	EPOC
	Series 7	1999	£699	16MB, upgradeable to 32MB	EPOC
	netBook	1999	£995	32MB, upgradeable to 64MB	EPOC
	Revo	1999	£299	8MB	EPOC
	Revo Plus / Diamond Mako	2000	£299	16MB	EPOC

Processor type/speed	Screen	Expansion options	Infrared
	16-character single line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	16-character, 2 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	16-character, 2 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
HD6303X/0.92Mhz	20-character, 4 line	2 'datapak' slots	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 200	4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 400	4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS	No
80C86/7.68Mhz	640 x 200	1MB 'internal' disk, OS in flash RAM	No
NEC V30/3.84Mhz	240 x 80	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160	2 SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	240 x 100 backlit	2 internal SSD slots	No
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	480 x 160 (later backlit)	2 SSD slots	Yes
NEC V30H/7.68Mhz	240 x 160	External (optional) SSD drive	Yes
ARM 710/18.43Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
ARM 710/18.43Mhz	640 x 320, backlit	PC-Card slot	Yes
NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz	480 x 160, backlit	2 SSD slots	Yes
NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz	240 x 100 backlit	2 internal SSD slots	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
CL-PS7111/18.43Mhz	320 x 200, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash slot	Yes
StrongArm SA-1100 /130Mhz	640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash and PC-Card slots	Yes
StrongArm SA-1100 /190Mhz	640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive	CompactFlash and PC-Card slots	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	480 x 160, touch sensitive	None	Yes
ARM 710T/36.86Mhz	480 x 160, touch sensitive	None	Yes

Using the Palmtop CD-ROM

- **Windows** users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install a 'web browser' application such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape (these can be found on almost all PC magazine cover CDs). After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

  Please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (e.g. use [Control]+[P] on the EPOC machine) if you have problems with running or removing software.

  Those who install a new web browser should note that it often comes with its default start page set to the maker's web site, meaning that it tries to go online. Just go into its 'View|Options' dialog (or similar) and set the start page to a file local to your computer (e.g. the *Palmtop* CD Start.htm file).

- **Macintosh** users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Please note that PsiWin is designed to run on PCs, so it will not work directly on your Mac. Recent CDs also come with a Mac-specific start page.

- **DOS** and **Amiga** owners may be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the library section and copy off the software as needed.

- Users of **RISC OS** machines have had a few problems with the 'Joliet' format used on the Palmtop CD-ROM. Fortunately that has now been resolved, and users of those machines can now access all of the web sites on the CD without getting error messages (although they obviously won't be able to run any of the applications). All that's needed is a copy of Warm Silence Software's CDROMFS. For more details, contact Warm Silence Software Ltd, PO Box 28, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1XX. tel: 0585 487642, fax: 01608 737172 or see their web site at *www.wss.co.uk*.

  RISC OS users will also find that the copy of the ArmLink web site on the CD contains PsiFS, a free application they can use to transfer files between their palmtop and desktop machines.

- **Linux** users should mount the CD on their computer and open their web browser on the 'Start.htm' file. PsiWin is of course designed to run on PCs, so will not work directly under Linux.

FOR SALE, WANTED, ETC...

Subject to available space this personal classified advertisement page is available free of charge as a courtesy to subscribers. It can only be used for Psion-related items. Please contact the Editor (see page 1 for address details) directly to submit your ads.

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For Sale

Psion MC400 (MC Word) laptop with 512K flash SSD, spreadsheet SSD, Spell Checker and Thesaurus SSD, deluxe leather carrying case, mains adaptor and serial cables - £120, Psion Siena (1MB) with leather case - £35. Contact: Steve on 01869 246185 (office hours)

Series 5 Classic - £185 ono.
Contact tommy on 07733231222 or Email:tommy.m@itw1.co.uk

Series 5mx with mains adaptor - £230.
Contact: Bob on 01276 22082 (after 7pm or at weekends)

Psion series 7 with modem card - £550. Also PCMIA Modem Adaptor to suit series 5mx or 3mx/c - £55 with card. Series 5 - £80.
Call: Mark on 01643 862 621 or email: markdeppe@yahoo.com

Psion MC600 DOS 3.2 notebook computer with mains adaptor and Targus carrying case.
Contact: Geoffrey.Miller@bigfoot.com, tel: 01908-667901 (evenings)

Series 5 - £150.
Email: AndrewMumford@compuserve.com or call 01227 742274 daytime.

Series 5 Classic with PC Card Modem Adaptor, two mains adaptors, Presentation Maker software, Route Planner Millennium, desk stand, car stand, leather case, several Palmtop magazines - £320.
Contact: Laurie Hartman on 0208 4412876 or email: laurie_hartman@compuserve.com

Series 5 Classic with leather case and mains adaptor, 32MB CF - £300 ono, Psion PCMCIA Adaptor - £55 ono, Psion 5 Printer lead (parallel) £25 ono, PCMCIA 33.6k modem - £45 ono, cigar lighter lead for Series 5 - £10, Palmtop GPS to fit 3c/5/5mx (Route Planner Millenium CD included) - £65 ono, Palmtop En Route 97 CD - £10, Palmtop Street Planner 99 CD - £10, Palmtop Route Planner North America CD - £10, Winlink 3 CD - £10, Palmtop CDs: 2, 7, 13 - £5 each, POD car mounting kit for Series 5 - £15.
Contact Tommy on 07733231222 or Email tommy.m@itw1.co.uk

Series 5 Classic manual (English) - £5 inc. UK postage.
Email: David on remembergoats@eidosnet.co.uk

Psion 56k infrared travel modem -£85 inc. p&p.
Contact: jonathan cox on 0775 883831 or email joncox30@aol.com

Psion 56k Travel Modem - £50.
Email: nigelcharles@compuserve.com

WANTED

Palmtop GPS, Route Planner Millennium, Street Planner Millennium (UK) and Street Planner Millennium (Europe).
Email: Mino at mino@mjem.fsnet.co.uk or Mobile: 0780 1717 001

WANTED

Series 3/3a serial cable and mains adaptor.
Email john@dunniom.freeserve.co.uk tel: 01624 833552

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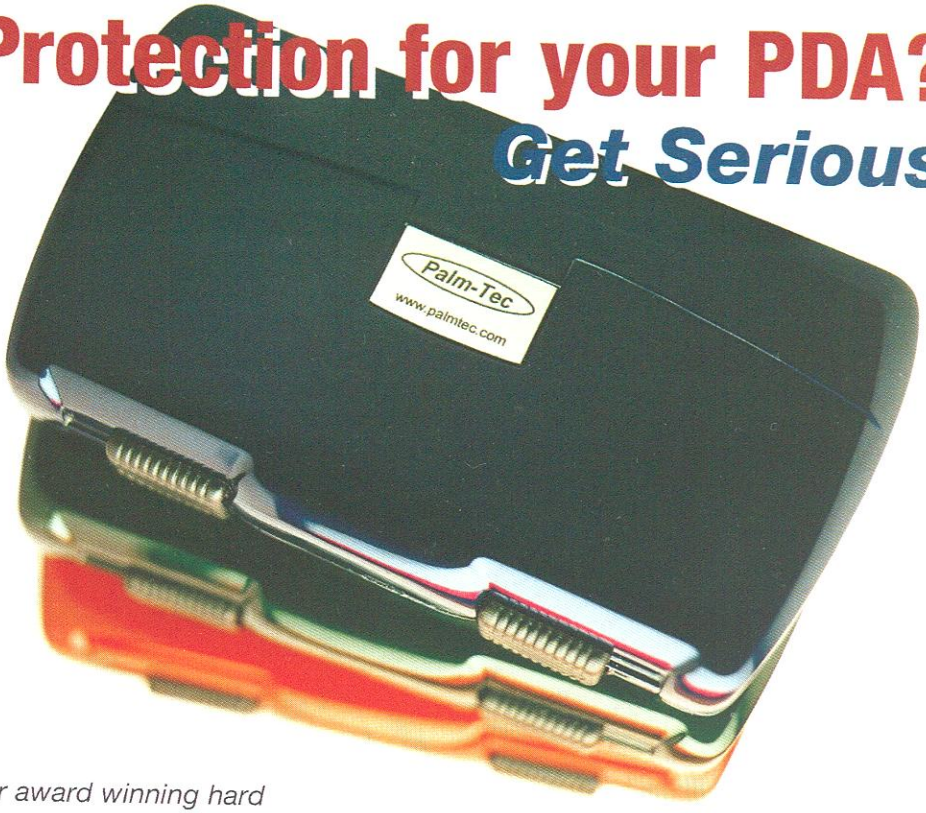

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	2MB	£60	£140
Series 3mx	2MB	£85	£185
Revo	8MB	£90	£185
Series 5	8MB	£85	£185
Series 5mx	16MB	£170	£295
Series 7	16MB	£300	£495

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PC link cable	3a	£15	£45
PsiWin + cables	3a (v1.0)	£15	£50
	3c/mx/5 (v2.2)	£10	£35
Printer link	3a	£1	£10
	3c/mx/5	£10	£25
3Fax modem	3a	£20	£50
Travel Modem	3c/mx/5	£30	£65
PC card modem adaptor	3a/3c/mx/5	£15	£45
Dacom Gold Card 14k	3a/c/mx/5	£15	£40
Dacom Gold Card 56k	3a/c/mx/5	£45	£95
AC adaptor	3a/3c	£1	£10
Leather case		£2-5	£5-20
Programming manual		£1	£6
Cyclone External Floppy	3c/mx/5	£30	£75
Palmtop GPS Sat receiver	5/5mx/7	£55	£110
Docking Station	5/5mx	£5	£15
	Series 7	£20	£50
Stylus	5/5mx	£1	£3

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	512K	£8	£30
	1MB	£15	£45
	2MB	£25	£65
Ram SSD	512K	£15	£45
	1MB	£25	£65
CF Disk (S5)	4MB	£5	£20
	32MB	£25	£60
	96MB	£65	£150
Larger sizes		£phone	£phone

SOFTWARE - Series 3		We Buy	We Sell
Act!	SSD	£5	£25
Berlitz Interpreter	SSD	£3	£15
Games 1/2/3a	SSD	£2	£10
Finance Pack	SSD	£3	£15
Monopoly	disk	£3	£15
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Collins Dictionary	CD	£10	£25
Chess	CD	£10	£30
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Games

Featured Program

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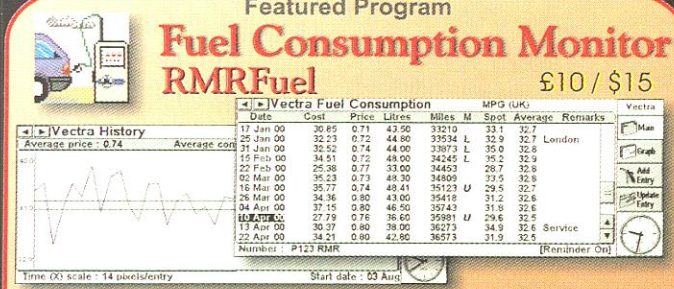
RMRFuel £10 / $15



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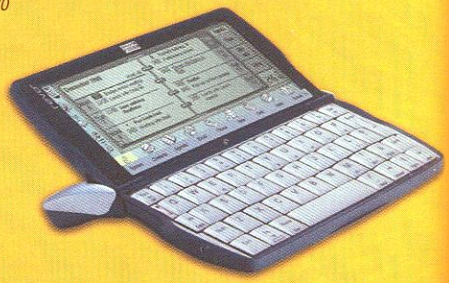

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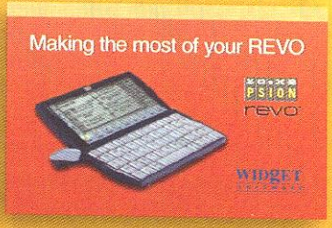

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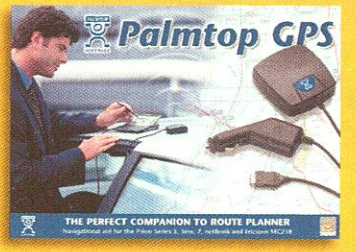

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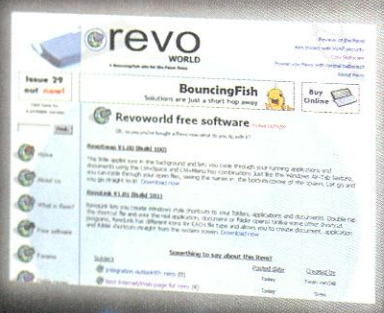

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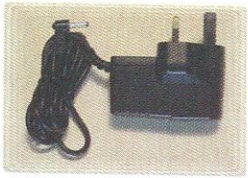

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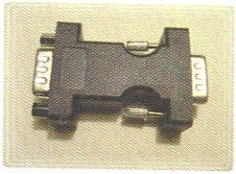

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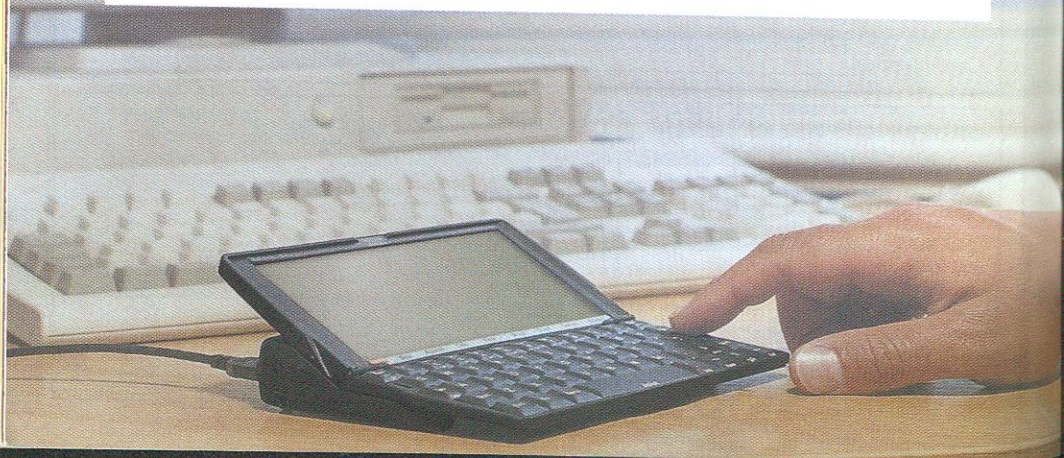

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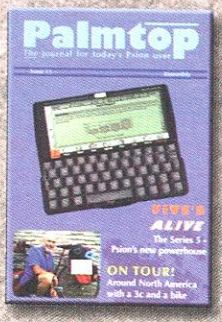

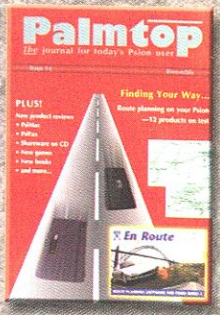

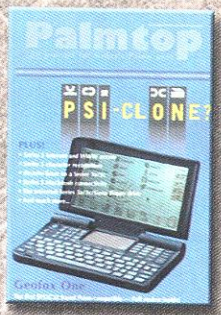

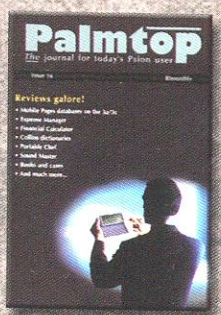

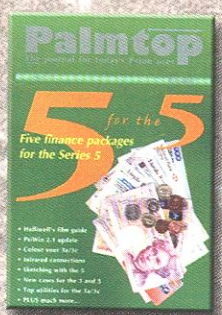

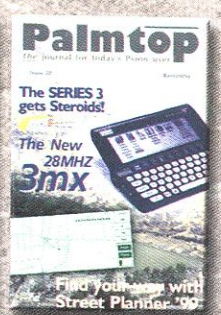

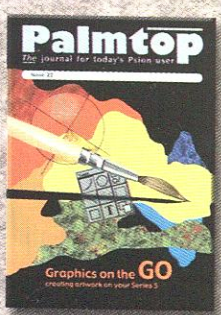

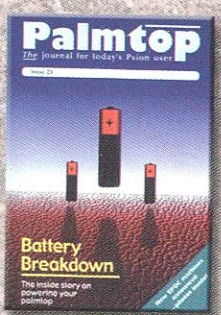

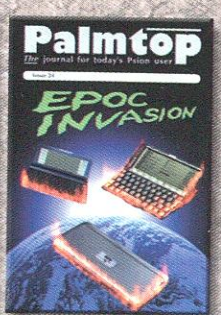

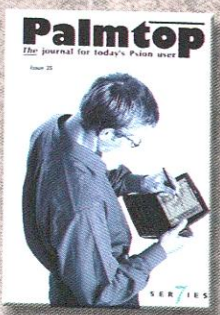

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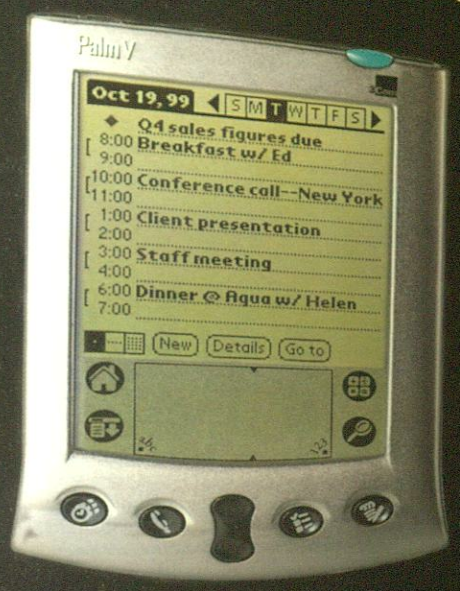

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